



**Backwoods**  
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## My view

### Do we need a Taxpayers' Bill of Rights?

Once again there is a storm of complaints from American citizens concerning abuses and harassment on the part of a government agency. In the past the offending agencies have included the Food and Drug Administration, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, among others. The latest agency accused of abuse is the IRS—again.

On the floor of Congress there have been hearings with sometimes tearful testimony from victims who have been hounded into bankruptcy, divorce, and even to the brink of suicide because of the agency's tactics. Oftentimes these victims weren't guilty of violating any of the tax codes. But that didn't seem to matter.

Even more troubling is that accompanying these complaints were confessions from IRS employees who verified the victim's complaints but who had refused to testify until they were promised their testimony would be incognito, because they were afraid of reprisals from within the agency.

As a consequence, some members of Congress have proposed remedies to curtail IRS abuses. These remedies include laws that would provide a "Taxpayers' Bill of Rights," as well as a watchdog group to oversee the agency.

This, of course, makes me wonder: are we going to need a separate "Bill of Rights" to protect us from the FDA, another to protect us from the FBI, and yet another from the ATF, with even more needed for the countless other agencies of the government?

Of course not. The fact is, we don't need to be "given" any new rights. And while watching the hearings on TV I couldn't help but wonder, can't just one member of Congress stand up and say:

*"Folks, we don't need new rights or new laws. All we need to do to protect our citizens from rapacious and arrogant bureaucrats and politicians is to enforce the Constitution of the United States, specifically the 4th Amendment which denies any government agency the right to conduct warrantless searches; the 5th and 6th Amendments which guarantee jury trials before a jury of their peers, along with the presumption of innocence for the accused, with the burden of proof on the IRS to show the accused are guilty—not for the citizen to prove he is innocent; the 9th Amendment which guarantees that we have more rights than just those listed in that venerable old document; and the 10th which clearly states that the Federal Government, including its agencies, haven't got any more power over us than are listed in the Constitution itself. It's*

*been around for over 200 years. Someone here must have read it."*

But no one in Congress is going to give that speech because many of them feel that if the government is to operate efficiently it has to operate unconstitutionally—at least some of the time. Proof of this is that the excuse we're given for the IRS using its Gestapo tactics—and this is from testimony given before Congress—is that trampling on the Bill of Rights is the only way that the IRS can operate and that enforcing our constitutional guarantees will stand in their way of doing their jobs efficiently.

Really? Color me surprised.

Does it make you wonder why, given that the way the Bill of Rights can hamstring efforts toward government efficiency, that our Founding Fathers insisted on them anyway? It's because low on their list of priorities was government efficiency. Really. But at the top of their list were individual liberties. So, in their testimony before Congress, what the IRS is saying is that the only way they can do their job efficiently is to turn that list upside down.

And they have. They conduct warrantless searches, they seize property without proof of guilt, they feel that instead of having to prove your guilt you must prove your innocence, and when you go to court you don't get a trial before a jury of your peers but are tried in a tax court before officials who used to be IRS personnel.

Let me tell you what I think the future of tax reform is: nothing. That's right folks, I don't think anything meaningful is going to happen. Any purported reform will be cosmetic with no penalties for the bureaucrats who violate our rights. For the IRS, and every other agency that wants to trample on our rights, it will be business as usual.

So, what can we—that's you, me, and the guy down the street—do about this? When our Founding Fathers felt the oppression of the British—King George III was *their* king—they took their guns and went into the field. They fought an eight-year war at the cost of at least 4400 of their own lives to win their liberties. Has it come to that for us? I don't know. But, until it does, write letters to your Senator and Representative. Tell them to enforce the Bill of Rights and inform them that you will no longer tolerate courts that bar trials before juries of our peers, where we the citizens determine guilt or innocence. Then vote Libertarian. Their platform, year in and year out, is the Constitution.

Finally, join the Fully Informed Jury Association and find out what you can do to recapture the jury system and how, when on a jury, you can throw out bad laws.

People have got to realize that our rights aren't the property of the President, the Congress, the Supreme Court, the lawyers, or the police to interpret as they please. They belong to you, and me, and that guy down the street. But if we don't act like we want them, we're going to lose them, because folks, the bureaucrats are right, the Bill of Rights really does stand in the way of "government efficiency." Δ

— John Silveira

# Cut your grocery bill in half

By C. M. Hudman

There was a time when I despised grocery shopping. Every time I walked into a grocery store it seemed the dollars were simply sucked out of my wallet. If it felt like I was getting ripped off, I probably was. Fed up with spending over a hundred dollars and walking out with only a week's worth of food, I found a number of easy ways to cut my family's food bill in half.



## Shop around

Loyalty to your favorite spacious and contemporary supermarket is a guaranteed way to throw money down the drain. I have yet to find a store that carries the cheapest of every possible item. Open your mind to a variety of different possibilities. Look for bulk food stores, canned goods outlets, restaurant supply stores, or food coops. They all may offer some great prices. The local butcher may also have some highly competitive prices on meat. Butchers are a great way to get in touch with farmers who are willing to sell a cow or hog for a good price. Roadside stands often have the best deals on quality produce. They are also more open to negotiation and even bartering.

## Cut out the middleman

Every time you buy a product in the grocery store you pay the farmer, processor, packager, distributor, and the grocery store, who in turn pay the stocker and checker, not to mention the mortgages on all those buildings. Try buying direct from the farmer.

There is bound to be some locally grown produce in your area. Check fruit orchards for seasonal deals, or herb farms (dehydrate your own spices). Stopping buy the local

farmer's market on the weekend while running errands can be a great way to buy direct and meet local farmers. If you are anywhere near the ocean try taking a trip to the harbor docks and buy direct from fishing boats or crabbing vessels.

## Plan your route

I know most hard working people are already short of time, and probably the thought of shopping at four or five different stores makes you shake your head. But I used to stop at the supermarket a couple of times a week anyway, and that was outside of the "big" bi-weekly trip.

Some store's have monthly sales. Plan on stopping at these once a month towards the beginning of the sale. Twice a month plan your bulk grocery shopping. Bring out the advertisements and plan your route. It may seem overwhelming at first but I spend far less time (and money) now that I've stocked my pantry full of loss leader sale items.

## Get gutsy and try generic

If you have shunned away from generic or store brands because of childhood memories of flat white and black boxes, it's time to try them again. They taste fine and the price is

even better. In today's competitive market the stores have taken it upon themselves to produce higher quality foods than ever. I have even heard that they are often packaged in the same processing plants. As for frozen vegetables, frozen broccoli spears is frozen broccoli spears, no matter what brand the package reads.

## Avoid convenience foods

When was the last time that a frozen pizza filled your family up. Try new recipes for pizza dough, and pile on the toppings. With far less money you can truly have pizzeria quality at home.

If you still waste money on serving-size juice boxes for the kids, invest in some reusable plastic juice glasses, fill them with bulk-bought juice, and keep them in the refrigerator for the kids to grab. It pays.

## Be an educated consumer

Knowing your prices will help you save money in many ways. Do you ever get mad at your spouse because he'll spend twice the going price for ice cream? Over time you have probably become educated and memorized prices for frequently bought items. I once had a friend that gasped in horror when the price of macaroni and cheese was raised a nickel a box. Sure her hubby still laughs about it, but she was truly shocked over the price increase.

Make up a list with the best unit prices you've ever found on regularly bought items. Try beating these prices every time you go to the store. You'll soon learn the difference between true sales and "sale priced" items.

## Figure unit prices

Bigger is not always better. Take a calculator along to figure out unit prices quickly. Some supermarkets have it conveniently posted on shelf tags already. Use what is available.

Taking the time to figure unit prices will save money. Are you buying the “family value” packaged goods because they indicate value? It may shock you to find that in comparison to the average size there may be little savings, and sometimes they cost more. Don’t believe packaging; the truth is revealed in the numbers. Figure out the price per unit of measurement—per pound, per ounce, per gallon. The other day I compared the prices of a 5-pound bag of russet potatoes for 69-cents and a 10-pound “sale” bag for \$1.79. Buying two 5-pound bags would save 41-cents over one 10-pound bag.

## Buy big

When you find an excellent deal it’s time to stock up your pantry. If you find an unbelievably low price, spend an extra \$5 or \$10 and buy enough to last until the next sale.

My husband laughed at me when I came home with 33 bottles of name brand BBQ sauce. It may have been crazy if the price had not been 29 cents a bottle, I have yet to see it cheaper, and because we love BBQ sauce not one bottle went to waste.

I’ve also been mocked by a teenage checkout boy because I was “buying out the meat department.” Maybe if he had to pay his own rent he would have taken note. The cut up fryers were on sale for a third the normal price. I had bought \$90 worth of good meat for only \$30 cost. I didn’t have to buy another chicken for months. I could have bought one or two extra, then paid full price a week later. Fill your freezer and your pantry with the highest quality foods available at the lowest possible price.

## Get a rain check

Are they out of the cans of soup that were a loss leader sale. Ask a stock person to check the back; many times the shelves are cleared so fast that stock people can barely keep up.

If there are no more to be found, get a rain check and have one made up in your child’s name also. Most stores are happy to fill out a rain check. It’s a little slip of paper that allows you the sale price when the new stock arrives, even if the sale is over.

## Bypass customer limits

If your store lures you in with loss leaders and then slaps a limit on the number you can purchase, it’s time for a creative solution. Every one of your children are a potential customer (the store never complains when they buy a candy bar). Split up the family and build more purchasing power.

Every time you walk into a store you are a potential customer. I will make repeated trips to the store for a great loss leader sale. You should too. The grocery store is trying to lure you into spending more so it’s time to beat them at their own game.

## Get the inside scoop

Ask your friendly grocer when they roll out the day old bread rack. This is a great way to fill up the freezer for half price. Do they fill up the discounted or damaged foods cart on a specific day each week? If they bring out the sale items Friday morning, plan accordingly.

## Make them work for you

If you are filling lunch boxes with expensive bologna and packaged ham, here is an easy solution that can save you a lot of money. Does your grocery store have a butcher or a deli? Instead of paying \$3.99 a pound for sliced sandwich ham, pick a whole or half ham from the meat cooler, and have them slice it. Many markets are happy to slice it as thin as you’d like, for free. This can result in big savings because whole hams are sold for far less (\$1.75 per pound).

Your butcher may also be willing to slice big chunks of cheese for you.

## Double up savings

I rarely use coupons because they are often for overpriced foods. However, double coupon day can sure bring down the prices. My daughter and I now look through the local coupon exchange bin at the library for possible great deals. The combination of free coupons and double coupon day gets us cans of chili for a quarter, and other items for next to nothing.

Double up the deals by combining coupons, sale items, and rebates. It does take some time, but for some people the deals add up. Call the 1-800 phone numbers on the packaging of your favorite products; many will send coupons directly to you if you ask. Δ

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## Try this gravel road waterbreak

By Mike Honeycutt

In the winter of 1995 I fulfilled a lifelong dream and purchased my East Tennessee mountain homestead consisting of an old seven-room house, 65 acres of land, and various outbuildings. The mile-long access road to the farm had been neglected over the years and was in need of repair. The road follows a wet weather creek and is bordered by steep terrain on both sides. In March of the following year I had the road ditched and scraped by a local grading contractor who afterwards spread over 150 tons of ¾-inch gravel along the length of the road. It did not take me long to realize that no amount of gravel and scraping would keep the road in good shape if water stayed in the road during heavy rains or melting snowfall.

In the spring of 1996 the area around my homestead received rainfall

amounting to over six inches in a twelve-hour time frame. Needless to say, the work I had done to the road disappeared as quickly as the rain had come and gone. I scraped the road with my tractor and had more gravel hauled in. After several attempts at devising ditches and blade-cut water breaks, I came up with the following method of diverting water off my road. It has been said that necessity is the mother of invention, and in this case that is exactly what happened.

The water break is constructed of 2x4 and 2x8 CCA treated pine. This material is readily available in 8-, 10-,

12-, and 16-foot lengths. In my case I needed a 12-foot long break to cover the road at an angle necessary to divert the water. I chose to piece the material for economy, but full length material can be used if desired. Using this method, a 12-foot unit can be built for under \$20 with new material.



*The water break crosses the road at an angle.*

Use the 2x8 pieces on the sides and the 2x4 for the bottom. Nail or screw the 2x8s into the side of the 2x4.

The beauty of this construction is that the leaves, gravel, and wash that accumulate in the water break can be easily removed by hand. The use of 2x8 sides provides a 6-inch depth for water flow, and this has proven to be adequate in my case. You could use 2x10-inch stock for the sides to give an increased depth. Be aware that it was not an easy task to dig the ditches at the eight inch depth in the rocky soil of this area. One could substitute wood, flattened conduit, or whatever is at hand to accomplish the same purpose.

The best way to place the breaks along your road is to do what I did. Get out your rainsuit during a heavy rain and mark wherever runoff diversion is necessary. My water breaks have been in use for some time now and have saved me considerable amounts of time and expense on the maintenance of my road. An occasional blading of the road with my 20hp tractor has kept the road in excellent condition. Δ

## How to tell a bad egg

By Scott Matthews

One of the things that my family loves most about living in the country is that we get to eat fresh eggs from our genuine free-range chickens. But then, free-range chickens don't always play by the rules; sometimes they don't lay their eggs in the nesting boxes we've so thoughtfully provided. It is all too common for one of our boys to run into the house with a clutch of eggs nestled in the front of his Tshirt.

"Look, Dad!" he cries excitedly. "I found one of the hens nesting in the hay barn (or under the trailer, or in the horse's manger, or even in a feed bucket)."

We used to feed those "wild" eggs to the pigs unless we felt adventurous (or desperate) enough to carefully crack one open to check it for freshness. Believe me, cracking open one rotten egg satisfies both my need for adventure and my hunger for eggs for a long time.

One day, however, a friend of ours showed us that you could judge the freshness of an egg by placing it in water about an inch deeper than the egg is long. A fresh egg will lay on the bottom, but as an egg ages, the air cell expands and it will start to stand on end, and when it's finally unfit to eat it floats. So, depending on how the egg lays in the water you can tell whether the egg is fresh enough to eat on its own, or if it is old enough that, because of the taste, you should use it only for baking, or if it is best to just discard it.

A little warning though: you can't tell the age of a frozen egg by floating it. Even a fresh egg will float if it's frozen. Δ

## Canning 101—pickles, fruits, jams, jellies, etc.

By Jackie Clay

For some reason, (definitely unknown to me) canning, as a method of very long term food storage, fell into disuse. Maybe it's the hurry/rush syndrome many folks have become addicted to, necessitating "instant" foods, microwave ovens, and mixes for everything from pancakes to casseroles. But for people of a self-reliant inclination—raising a good portion of their own wholesome, chemical-free food and establishing a storage method that is easy and results in tasty food, even years down the road—home canning is the way to go.

And remember, no power outage or mechanical failure will cause your pantry full of home canned food to go bad, as can happen with frozen food. This is the reason I do not freeze food now. I lost half a freezer full of food due to a two-week-long ice storm power outage. Besides, where food only stays good for a year, max, in the freezer, it stays great tasting for years

on the pantry shelf neatly packaged in shining glass jars.

I regard home canning as essential to self-reliance as any other facet of my lifestyle. Canning allows my family to eat chemical-free, delectable fruits, vegetables, nutmeats, pickles, preserves, jams, and jellies, as well as meats and fish, already cooked and tender, just waiting for a meal.

I can year-round, making up such things as chili, stews, dry beans, (like pintos for refried beans), spaghetti sauce, pizza sauce, smoked trout, elk stew, etc. Whatever the season, there's always something special to can up for later meals. Nearly anything you can find on a store shelf can be canned easily at home.

When I tell this to people, I'm usually met with the same blank stare and the questions: Isn't home canning hard to do? Won't eating home canned food give you food poisoning? Won't the canner blow up?

No. Canning is very easy. If you can boil water and tell time you can home can.



*Tomatoes: 15 minutes from garden to spaghetti sauce, pizza sauce, tomato paste...*



*Check each jar after it cools with one finger, being sure it is tightly indented; if it is not, it is not sealed, and must be redone or eaten soon. It needs refrigerating until then.*

Properly canned food will not give your family food poisoning. I've canned for 35 years and no one has ever suffered from the least bit of ill effect from my delicious home canned food. And no, the canner will not blow up despite the old cartoons to the contrary. My old canner is 20 years old, has received very heavy use, and is still going strong, with no repairs necessary.

It is simple to start out. Canning doesn't even require a pressure canner, which can be a bit expensive—about \$130-\$150. (Remember, though, that this is often a once-in-a-lifetime expense, bringing the cost down to less than \$10 a year.) A person may begin canning with a water bath canner, available at most discount stores for under \$20. These are the big blue pots with a lid and wire rack you may already be familiar with. You can also find them at yard sales for as little as a dollar. Just hold them up to the light and stick your head

inside to be sure there are no small holes allowing leakage.

Jars do not have to be purchased new. Just get word around to your neighbors and friends that you are going to be canning and need jars. A note tacked up on a grocery store or feed store bulletin board or placed in your local advertiser paper will also work wonders. Any jar that a canning jar lid and ring will fit on—and is chip and crack free—will work. Despite rumors, such jars—previously containing such things as honey, mayonnaise, Sanka, etc.—will work for home canning. I have used them

for many years even for such things as corn, meat, and fish, all of which require long, pressure canning. They do not break any more often than do brand name canning jars. And canning jars last for generations. I am canning with a few of my grandmother's old blue Mason Jars.

Pick up a good, fairly recent canning book. This is a "must," as it contains time tables, specific directions for many, many different foods, as well as a lot of recipes for home canned goodies. You can also ask your county extension office for literature on home canning. It's usually free for the asking. Or go to your library. But, if you plan to keep up with your new endeavor, you will want a detailed book or booklet of your own.

Do not try to can using those "country style" cute jars with zinc lids, glass lids, and rubbers. Not only are they

expensive, but you cannot tell if they are properly sealed. A jar improperly sealed will allow the food to spoil—not a good thing.



*Green beans: 15 minutes from garden to canning jars!*

Often, when your friends or neighbors give you jars or you buy them at a flea market, auction, or yard sale, you will also get some rings. These are reusable for years and years, serving only to hold the flexible metal lid down on the jar rim during the canning process. The rings need only to be solid and strong. Rust is of no consequence, unless it is so bad that the rings are flimsy.

Lids need to be

bought new for each use, for if the lid has been bent on opening it will not reseal, and the rubber is usually only good for a one-time use. Further use may result in seals which come loose or a lid that will not seal. Both conditions are a waste of money, time, and the result can be dangerous, i.e., food spoilage.

Canning with the hot water bath is a simple process: cleaned, sterilized (boiled) jars are filled with (often) hot high-acid food. The jar rim is wiped clean. A hot, boiled new lid is placed on the jar. And a clean ring is screwed firmly onto the jar. The filled jars are then placed carefully in the boiling water bath of the canning kettle and settled into an individual place on the wire rack. When

filled, the water level needs to be one to two inches above the top of the tallest jars. The cover is put on the kettle and it is allowed to return to a full rolling boil, at which time the processing time is begun.

At the end of the processing time each jar is carefully lifted out and placed on dry folded towels where sealing will occur as the jar cools. Usually you can hear the loud, musical ping as each jar seals. (I've noticed that my wide-mouth jars usually seal first). Leave the jars alone until they are cool. Don't wipe, poke or move them, or you may end up with an incomplete seal. And do not screw the rings tighter thinking it will "help" the jar to seal. Tightness doesn't equal good sealing. It happens due to the vacuum caused by the processing.

After the jars have cooled (usually overnight), you may remove the rings, wash the jar, and place it in a cool, dark, dry area to store. It is a good idea to mark the lid with the contents and date, in order to allow for the best rotation. Often, foods such as spaghetti and taco sauce look alike, and you



*David filling jars with green beans*

really don't want spaghetti sauce in tacos.

What foods can you can with the hot water bath? A lot! This processing method will be good for all high acid foods—jams, jellies, preserves, nut meats, pickles, tomatoes, tomato sauce, (without mushrooms or meat), all fruits and fruit products such as butters, conserves, fruit cocktail, juices etc., barbecue sauce, chili sauce, catsup, relish, and more. This list would be huge if we took into consideration all the possibilities with fruits and pickles. I can prickly pear jelly and jam, chokecherry jelly, corn relish mix, barbecue sauces, tomato relish, eight types of pickles, watermelon pickles, six fruit juices, and combinations such as raspberry-apple and many more, often forgotten by countless home canners.

## Hot water bath tips

- A combination of hot and cold will crack and break jars. Put hot food into hot jars, cold into warm jars. Do not put hot jars onto cold surfaces or in cold drafts.
- Using a jar with a tiny chip in the top or a small crack in the side will result in either a broken jar or an incomplete seal. Before filling them, check each jar carefully. I routinely run my clean finger around each top as I am about to fill it, just to double check.
- Be sure to adjust your processing time according to altitude. Most charts are calculated to altitudes of 1,000 feet or less. You must increase the processing time by five minutes for altitudes of 1,000 to 3,000-feet, ten minutes for 3,001 to 6,000-feet, fifteen minutes for altitudes of 6,001 to 8,000-feet etc.
- Do not remove the jar rings for those pickles that are not processed before placing in jars, such as some types of dill pick-

les. Again, read your canning book.

- If the boiling water does not come over the tops of the jars by at least one inch, add more boiling water to accomplish this.
- Always use the wire rack of your canning kettle, as the boiling water must circulate well under, over, and between jars. The wire rack will also prevent overheating (and possible cracking) of the jar bottoms and will keep the jars from bumping together while processing, which might result in breakage.
- Always check the seal as you store the jars. Each jar lid should be indented in the center, having no give as you gently press down with a finger. If it makes a noise on pressure, or if it can be moved downward, it is not sealed and must either be reprocessed with a new lid or eaten soon.
- When canning tomatoes or tomato products, use "regular" high-acid tomatoes, not low-acid tomato varieties. If unsure—for instance if you bought them at a



*Canning tools of the trade: lids, jars, wooden long handled spoon, canning funnel, jar lifter, measuring spoons, jar rings*

farm market—add two tablespoons of lemon juice or ½ tsp. citric acid (vitamin C) to each quart to ensure the product is acid enough not to spoil. Neither product affects the taste a bit and only increases the nutritional value.

- Don't try to double recipes or otherwise alter them. You may run into trouble, especially if inexperienced.
- Always be careful of steam and hot jars as they can burn you. Lift canner lid away from you to allow steam to escape safely, away from your face.

## Two easy projects

### **Bread and butter pickles:**

(Called thus because they are good enough to eat at every meal)

7 slim medium cukes  
5 crisp medium onions  
1 bell pepper, chopped  
1 small sweet red pepper (chopped)  
¼ c salt  
cracked ice

### **Pickling solution:**

2½ c white vinegar  
2 ½ c granulated sugar  
1 Tbsp mustard seed  
1 tsp celery seed  
½ tsp whole cloves  
¾ tsp turmeric



*The finished product being lifted to a folded dry towel to cool and seal.*

*The jar lifter prevents burns.*

Mix veggies, mix in salt and cracked ice. Put in fridge or a cool place and let stand for at least three hours, then drain.

Mix pickling solution. Add to drained veggies in kettle. Bring mix to boiling, remove veggies to clean, sterilized jars immediately. Pour hot liquid over to cover leaving ½-inch of headspace (no more). Wipe jar rims, checking for nicks, with a clean damp cloth, then place hot, sterilized lids on and screw the rings on firmly-tight. Place filled jars on a dry folded towel. Quickly repeat this process with the rest so that the veggies do not cool down. If pickles in the kettle are allowed to boil, they will soften. These pickles are very crisp and fresh tasting. Our favorites. (I also slice a batch of smaller cukes lengthwise for spears, and use the same recipe with great results).

#### **Canned tomatoes:**

Fill a large pot with water up to ¾ full and put on to boil. Fill a clean water bath canner ½ full and bring it to a boil, with the wire rack in place. Wash the jars in warm soapy water and rinse. Check each one for minute cracks and nicks in the rim. Leave the jars in the hot water until needed. Separate the lids and place them in a sauce pan of water. Bring to a boil, then leave in the water until you need them.

Wash sound, ripe, high-acid tomatoes and dip them in the boiling water of your large pot (I use a wire basket) for about a minute or until the skins crack. Then place the tomatoes in cold water. This allows the skins to slip off easily. Core out the stem and discard. Leave the tomatoes whole or cut, depending on size and preference. Pack into jars and either mash down, so that the juice covers them, or cover with hot water leaving a ½-inch of space between the product and jar rim.

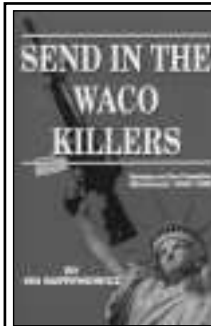
Add ½-tsp of salt to each pint or 1 tsp. to each quart, if desired for taste. Remove any large air bubbles with a wooden spoon. Wipe off jar rim with

damp cloth, place the lid on, and screw ring down firmly. Place the jars into boiling water bath carefully and process pints for 40 minutes and quarts for 45 minutes counting from when the water returns to a full rolling boil. (Remember to adjust time according to altitude). Remove carefully and place jars on dry folded towel until cool and sealing is complete.

See how easy canning is? Neither of these projects takes a rocket scientist or over an hour of your time. The total cost to me is about 10-cents a quart canned on the wood range, or 12-cents a quart on the propane stove. Not bad for really great eating—picked fresh from our garden 15 minutes before, and absolutely no chemicals added. Even my seven-year-old son, David, can put up a surprising number of crops with very little assistance. So you see, canning truly is for everybody, men included. After all, some men are our best cooks. Just look at Richard Blunt, *Backwoods Home's* illustrious food editor. Like I said, if you can boil water and tell time, you can definitely learn to can on your first try. My oldest son, Bill, who is unmarried, makes fantastic meals including wonderful apple pies from scratch. And he, like David, learned to can at an early age. Home canning is a definite life skill worth developing. Δ

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self-reliant people  
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## **SEND IN THE WACO KILLERS**

**T**hree times the International Society of Newspaper Editors has included Vin Suprynowicz in their list of the 12 top weekly editorial writers in North America. For years his shoot-from-the-hip style has opened the eyes of thousands to government abuse of our liberties. In this book, *Send in the Waco Killers*, he blends material taken from his syndicated column with new commentary to give the reader a detailed, reporter's-eye-view of how the rights and freedoms of Americans are being subverted.

He uses factual accounts from the daily news to show how the Feds use the drug war, the public schools, jury rights, property rights, the IRS, gun control, and anti-militia hysteria to increase its power and control over us. He details how agents of the ATF and FBI have routinely lied, how they use paid informants to infiltrate Constitutionally-protected militia groups, then fabricate evidence to get arrests and discredit them.

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# You must understand venison to be able to cook it successfully

By Bill Palmroth

**V**enison, the collective term for the meat of all hoofed big game animals including deer, elk, antelope, and even bighorn sheep, differs from domestic meats in some important ways. Understanding these differences will be an important factor in your successes or failures as a chef.

When using domestic meats like beef and pork, one has some assurances that the animal was probably fed no strongly flavored foods, was fattened well, aged correctly, and even limited in exercise. Venison offers none of these promises. If cared for like domestic meat (and it should be) after the kill, however, it also should be excellent.

The effect of a different lifestyle on the meat of big game must be considered when substituting it in your favorite recipes. Here are some helpful hints on how to prepare it properly.

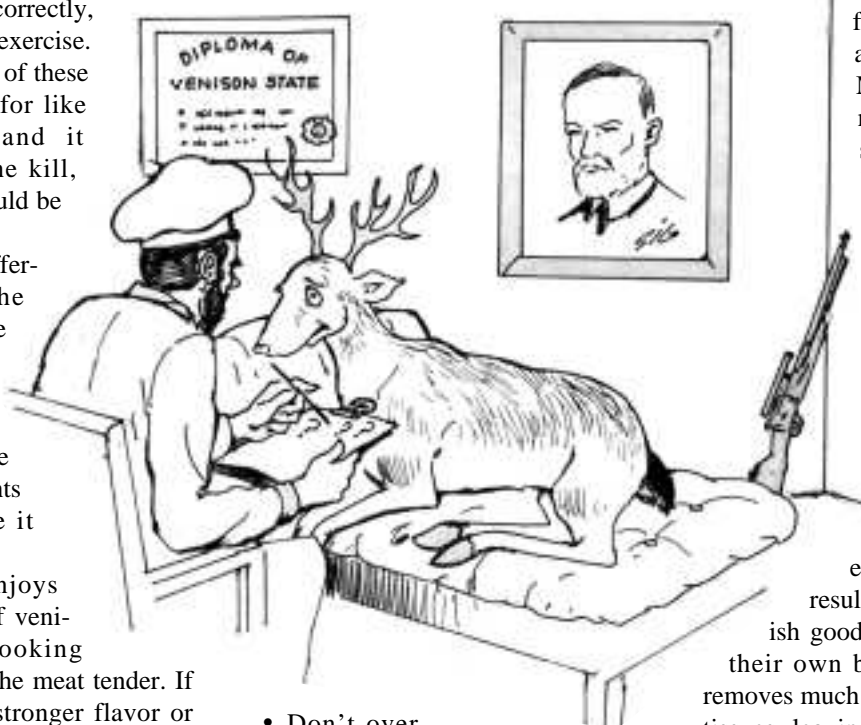
If your family enjoys the natural flavor of venison, your only cooking problem is making the meat tender. If your animal has a stronger flavor or the folks at home do not prefer the natural venison taste, you may increase their enjoyment of these meats in three ways:

- Disguise the flavor with spices, herbs, or seasonings. Recipes with barbecue sauces, soy sauce, and marinades will help this effort.

- Dilute the flavor by mixing venison with other meats and vegetables in stews, soups, and hamburger dishes.

- Overwhelm the family by serving venison in so many ways that they learn to like it.

Most cooks like to try new recipes now and then and even make up some of their own. Be reasonable. Expect some limited successes and maybe even a failure or two when experimenting with venison. Write some notes to yourself when you hit on a combination the family really enjoys. Keep these general rules in mind for successful venison cookery:



- Don't overcook. Venison, especially deer, has short fibers that toughen quickly. Overcooking or using very high temperature leads to tough meat. Serve venison about medium-well, never rare or very well done.

- Most venison has little fat and in this way only corresponds to low-quality beef. Take this into consideration when cooking. Tender cuts like

loin or tenderloin can be broiled or cooked on the charcoal grill. Less tender cuts like round are best cooked with moist heat—i.e., stewing or potroasting.

- With little fat, venison is a dry meat. Efforts must be made to preserve moisture. Wrapping in foil, using a cooking bag, or covering with bacon strips will help.

- Remove any venison fat before cooking. This seems like a contradiction since the meat is normally low in fat, but any game flavor will be most pronounced in the fat. Substitute beef or pork fat if needed.

- Use acid to tenderize. Vinegar, tomato sauce, and french dressing

sauses are good possibilities. Crushed papaya fruit also will do a suitable job of tenderizing. Meat should be marinated in the chosen sauce at least 24 hours. Venison treated this way may be broiled or charcoaled.

- Venison generally is sweeter than domestic meats. Reduce sugar by one-fourth in sauce recipes originally developed for beef or pork.

Successful cooking may need to start several steps sooner for best results. Those who truly relish good venison invariably cut their own by boning it out. This removes much of the tough connective tissues, leaving straight-grained muscle for steaks and roasts. The following recipes are based on boned-out meat. If someone else cut the meat, it is a simple task to remove any bone before trying one of these old favorites.

## Panfried venison:

One of the oldest and probably still the best ways to serve venison is quick

frying of thin steaks. Cut thin steaks from the loin, sirloin, or round  $\frac{1}{4}$  or  $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch thick. Flour or bread lightly. Quick fry in a sizzling hot skillet not over  $1\frac{1}{2}$  minutes per side. Season with salt and serve hot. Use cooking oil, butter, bacon grease, or beef suet for shortening. Frying time is critical. Meat should be brown outside and gray or just a hint of pink in the middle. If steak is dry or tough, it was overcooked. Leavings in the skillet make good pan gravy.

### Venison roast:

Another method that preserves moisture is cooking in foil. Lay out a thawed roast on a sheet of foil large enough for double wrapping. Sprinkle with one package of dehydrated vegetable soup mix. Roll the roast in the mix until as much of the dry soup as possible is coating the roast's surface. Wrap tightly in the foil and place in the oven preheated to 350 degrees. Depending on how well done you like your venison, cook the average 2 to 3-pound roast  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours. The dry soup mix provides salt and seasoning; the meat will come out moist and juicy.

### Crock pot venison:

Cut steak-sized portions  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch thick. Brown approximately  $1\frac{1}{2}$  pounds of these in a skillet and place in the bottom of the average 3 to 4-quart crock pot. Cover with a can of cream of mushroom soup thinned with up to  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup milk. Top with 2 tablespoons of butter. Peel or scrub 6 small to medium potatoes and place them on top of the meat and soup. Finish filling the crock pot with uncooked chunks of squash or similar form of vegetable. Set on low and forget for 8 to 10 hours. If you do this after breakfast in the morning, supper will be ready and waiting with no further effort. The meat will be tender and the soup will have formed a delightful gravy for the potatoes.  $\Delta$

*The Ninth Year*

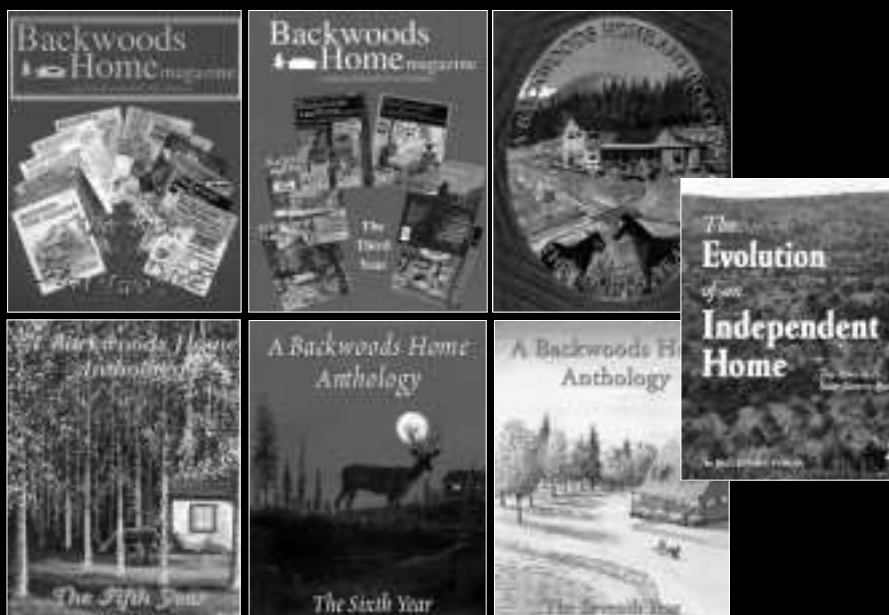
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## The manure heated hot-bed — an old-tyme Yankee jewel

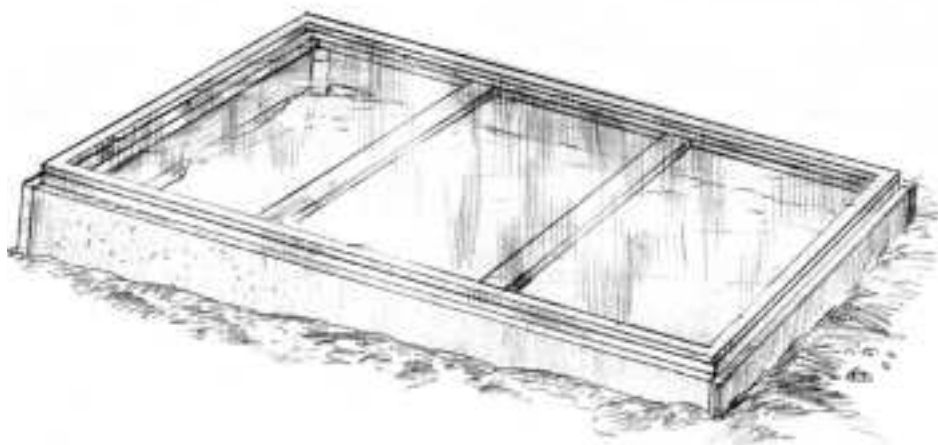
By Rev. J.D. Hooker

For several years, my wife and I had been planning on building ourselves a simple greenhouse in which we'd planned on starting our tomato and other spring bedding plants, as well as possibly providing ourselves with some type of fresh produce during the cold winter months. I guess now though those plans are on hold, possibly for keeps, as we've found what appears to be a superior alternative.

Actually we first learned of this "better idea" from a sweet elderly lady who now resides in one of our area's nursing homes. Her body might be worn clear out, and I doubt if she has very much time left here on earth, but her mind is still sharper than her embroidery needles. She's among the very best story tellers I've ever met.

In fact, this whole idea originally came up from hearing one of her tales of growing up on her grandfather's truck farm just outside Boston, Massachusetts. It seems that he'd operated hundreds of these sort of hot-beds every winter, employing about a dozen people to provide fresh lettuce

and other produce for several of Boston's restaurants and markets through the cold months of winter. He also used the same hot-beds to start



*Years ago, this style of hot-bed was routinely used by New England market farmers.*

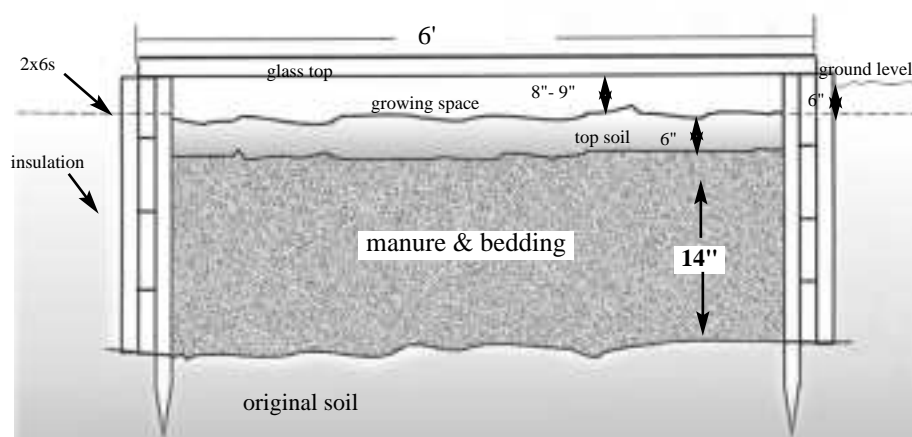
the thousands of tomato, pepper, egg plant, and other vegetables that his small farm produced during the regular growing season.

The areas outlying many of our larger eastern cities, such as New York, Providence, Boston, Newark, and others, once sustained hundreds of such

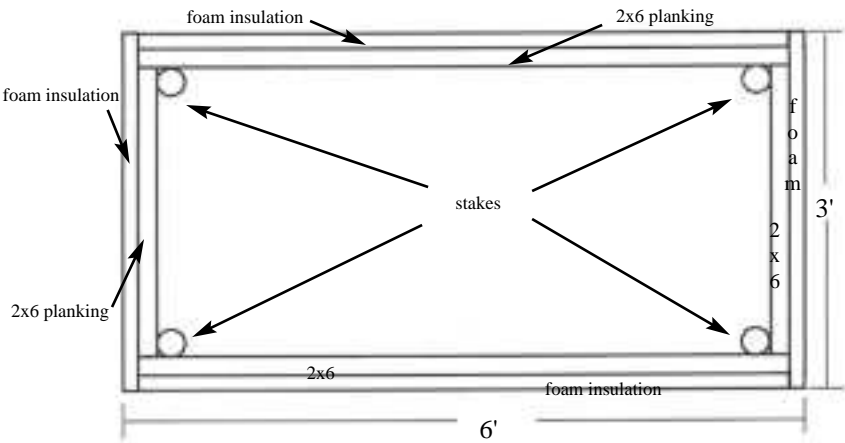
Additionally, the same manure that is used to warm the hot-bed as it decomposes also provides the fertilizer for the growing beds, and it is a plentiful supply of quality compost for use in the regular garden at the same time.

So, following our friend's suggestion, I put together one of these manure heated hot-beds last September for a "trial run." I just wanted to see what we could actually grow, and in early November we planted several different vegetable varieties inside. Towards the end of that same month, I wound up spending a lengthy stay in the hospital. But when I was finally home again, we were enjoying buttercrunch lettuce, kohlrabi, Swiss chard, endive, and even coleslaw made from fresh Stonehead cabbage—all picked fresh from our hot-bed at Christmas time.

Replanting in early February (this time striving just to see what sort of



*side view*



overhead view

quantities we could produce), we managed to grow 48 fresh heads of lettuce before the end of March, after which we used the same hotbed for starting our tomato, tobacco, and other plants for setting out in our regular garden.

Honestly, putting together this basic manure heated hot-bed was really a simple task, especially since all of the actual details had already been worked out more than a hundred years ago. The only modern adaptation that I opted to include was in using two-inch thick rigid Styrofoam insulation, rather than a foot of manure, to insulate around the outside of the growing box.

Years ago, when this style of hot-bed was routinely used by our New England market farmers, three-foot wide by six-foot long was the most widely standardized size used. Having half of an old wooden framed glass patio door readily on hand for fashioning the top cover, we decided to just stick with those same dimensions. So our first step was to dig out about a 40-inch wide by 80-inch long hole that was roughly 28-inches deep, on a gently sloping spot right near the house.

Next, not wanting the whole thing to just rot away—yet reluctant to use pressure-treated wood near growing food—I drove 2½-inch diameter mul-

berry wood stakes in the corners, and used osage, (2-inches x 6-inches) to box in the sides as shown. Any other naturally rot resistant wood—cedar, catalpa, redwood, etc.—should work just as well. Two-inch thick, 24-inch wide pieces of rigid foam insulation were then nailed to the outside of this in-ground wooden box.

The rear side of the box was built about two inches higher than the front to allow rain, melting snow, etc. to run off of the glass easily, while regular inexpensive stamped sheet-metal hinges were used to attach the used patio door to this upper side.

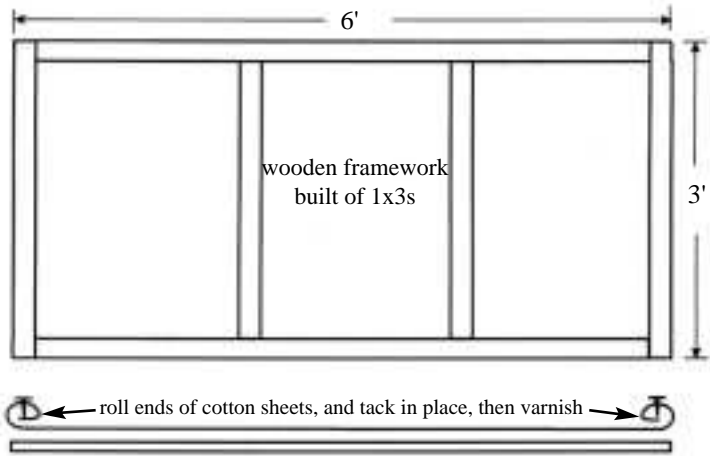
About a week before we figured we were ready to plant, we cleaned out our burros' stalls and packed 14 inch-

es of manure and urine-rich bedding into the bottom of the hole. We added about six inches of rich garden soil atop this manure pack and brought the level inside of this framework right up to six inches below regular ground level, which we'd been informed was perfect.

It's probably worth mentioning here that our elderly friend informed us that her grandfather'd insisted that only equine manure, (from horse, ponies, mules, and burros) produces enough heat to make these hot-beds work. Since that was what we had available anyway, it's what we used. And it did work just fine. I'd be mighty interested, though, in hearing of any other readers' results with cow, goat, rabbit, or other manures.

At any rate, every night a couple of heavy old quilts and a waterproof canvas tarp were used to cover up the glass top to help conserve the heat. After eight days, the thermometer we'd left inside showed that the manure pack had heated the interior to just over 80 degrees. So, we planted our seeds, which germinated just as readily as if they'd been sown in the spring garden. An inch and a half of half-rotted sawdust was used to mulch around these young plants.

On days when the inside temperature reached up over 90-degrees or so, we'd prop the glass cover open a cou-



cloth "windows" for coverings

ple of inches for a few hours. This allowed some of the frigid winter outside air to lower the internal temperature to a nice growing level. Of course, we continued to cover the glass with the quilts and tarp every night.

As our stalls needed to be cleaned out again by the end of January anyway, we shoveled the contents of the hot-bed back out, added them to the compost pile, then started all over again with equally terrific results. I'm not absolutely certain that this step was really necessary, but it did ensure that the bed would provide sufficient heat to grow a really nice lettuce crop during those cold and cloudy late winter months.

Now, the results we achieved with this type of hot-bed the very first winter really impressed us. But, possibly more importantly, a really good friend of ours, who owns a large, first rate, restaurant in Ft. Wayne (only about 30 miles away from us), was just as impressed. So this summer we're putting in a couple dozen similar manure-heated hot-beds, with a built-in ready market for all of the fresh specialty salad produce we can provide next winter. And I'm certain we can provide at a greater profit margin for ourselves than growers in the warm-winter states who need to ship their produce over long distances to market.

At the same time, a grocery store-owning acquaintance has developed an interest in purchasing bedding plants (tomatoes, eggplant, squash, collards, flowers, and so forth) from us next spring. We can start these in the hot-beds and get paid cash when we deliver them, while she can resell them at retail for a tidy profit of her own.

As I very seriously doubt that we'll wind up finding a sufficient number of used patio doors to cover this many hot-beds, I plan on just building some simple wooden frame-works, and stretching used white cotton bed-sheets (readily available very inexpen-

sively at the Salvation Army store) over them as shown. With a couple of coats of clear varnish, these translucent coverings will admit nearly as much light as clear glass windows, with very negligible out-of-pocket expense.

I really doubt if I can actually impress on you just how pleased we are with this "old timey" growing method. But I can really see how so many of New England's earlier market farmers once grew so much produce while employing so many folks, for so many winters, so profitably. This old-fashioned manure heated hot-bed really is like a diamond from the past and seems far too valuable an idea to be lost.

So, no matter whether you're interests lie only in providing your family with some delectably fresh salad makings all winter, or like us, you have located a ready market for the crisp, fresh veggies that you could provide through the cold months, or you want to use it to start spring bedding plants for your own use and/or to market, my family and I give this old Yankee growing method the highest possible recommendation. It really works. Δ

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## For good compost every time, observe these few simple rules

By Tom R. Kovach

Composting allows naturally occurring microbes to convert yard waste, such as leaves and grass clippings, to a useful organic soil additive or mulch.

For effective decomposition, the microorganisms need oxygen, water, and nitrogen. Particle size also affects efficiency. The smaller the plant pieces, the more rapidly they will break down. Use a shredder or power mower to chop leaves and small twigs before adding them to the pile.

To keep your yard looking neat, save space, and speed composting time, plan to contain your compost pile in some type of structure. Typical dimensions of a compost pile are five feet by five feet by five feet. Simple bin-type structures can be built from woven-wire fencing and metal posts. More permanent structures can be bought or made.

Locate your compost pile close to where the compost will be used and where it is protected from drying winds, yet where it can receive some sunlight to help heat it.

Among materials that can be composted are nonwoody shrub trimmings or twigs less than one-fourth inch in diameter, faded flowers, plants left over at the end of the gardening season, lake plants, straw, coffee grounds, eggshells, fruit and vegetable scraps, shredded newspaper (black-and-white print only), small amounts of wood ash, and sawdust. Sawdust requires the addition of extra nitrogen; wood ash raises compost alkalinity and may result in nitrogen loss from the pile.

There should be little need to compost grass, since clippings can be safely left on the lawn if you mow regularly and remove only a third of

the blade length each time. However, if you do compost grass, mix it with other yard waste. Grass clippings alone pack down and restrict air flow, which limits the availability of oxygen that is needed for decomposition.

Some things should not be composted. Pet feces can transmit diseases. Meat, bones, grease, whole eggs and dairy products attract rodents and other animals. Badly diseased or insect-infested plants and weeds that are loaded with seed may not heat up enough to be rendered harmless.

Build your compost pile in layers. Begin with 8 to 10 inches of leaves, grass, or plant trimmings. Water it to the point of being moist, but not soggy. Then add a nitrogen source, such as ammonium nitrate, ammonium sulfate, or an inexpensive high-nitrogen lawn fertilizer without pesticide.

Sprinkle the pile with one-third to a half cup of fertilizer per 25 square feet of surface area. If you have access to livestock manure, you can use a two-inch layer of manure as your nitrogen source.

You may choose to add a one-inch layer of soil or completed compost over the nitrogen to increase the number of decomposing microbes in the pile. However, most leaves and plant scraps have enough microorganisms to get the job done without this addition.

Repeat these layers until the pile is about five-feet high, watering each time you add new layers.

An active compost pile will heat to somewhere between 130 and 150 degrees. As the center cools, turn the pile to help speed decomposition and minimize any objectionable odors. You will need to do this once or twice a month. Continue watering your

compost pile periodically to keep it moist but not soggy. You can add a little fresh material when you turn the pile, but generally you're better off beginning a new pile.

A well-managed compost pile will be ready in two to four months during the warm season. An untended pile will take a year or more to decompose. When completed, your compost pile will be about half its original height and will have a pleasant, earthy smell. Δ

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# We built our solid rubble road out of the debris of a carwash

By Glynis Hart

“It looks like we’re finally going to get the road in,” I told my dad, walking along the 20-foot-wide right of way that led to the homestead my husband and I had been building in Upstate New York. What do you think?”

A lifelong woodsman and former forester, one who had supervised roadbuilding, Dad looked uncomfortable. A large, quiet man who rarely smiles, he is careful not to criticize, either. Around us were acres of pine and poplar; the soil is mostly clay, and it stays wet year-round. Underground springs and seasonal streams trickle everywhere, despite the fact that we’re at the top of a hill.

“Put it anywhere but here,” he said finally. “It’s too wet.”

“Can’t. The right of way crosses someone else’s property, and they want it where it is. Besides, the whole hill is wet. All the basements up here have water running through them.”

We dropped the subject and continued picking our way through the mud toward his car, parked on dry ground at the beginning of the road. The road had been in progress for 10 years. First, my husband Harry had paid a guy who was doing some work for the neighbors about \$75 to drive his loader on a track through the woods until he reached the home site. The driver knocked the trees down—giant white pines with wide, shallow root systems—and lifted them aside.

Next, two 6-ton dump loads of shale gave us a place to park off the neighbors’ road, and Harry put 14 pickup truck loads of field stone in the deep spots. In dry weather you could get a truck down the road, but it was still always possible to get stuck.

To move building material for the house, we bought a full-time four-wheel-drive Ram Charger and drove it to death on the road. The truck’s big tires chewed away at the rock and



*A car wash bites the dust and is recycled into an attractive rubble road.*

roots until the road had the consistency of pancake batter, so that even the Ram Charger could no longer make it.

After Harry had dragged his beloved truck out of the mud several times using come-alongs and a 100-foot rope—not to mention changing all the universals on the truck twice—its transmission gave up and it refused to go any faster than 12 mph. We parked it in the rapidly growing truck graveyard near the house, and we fell back to carrying

everything to and from the house to the parking spot.

We tried to move as much as we could in winter. First, because we could drag heavy loads over the snow on a sled, and second because a hard freeze and snow made the road safe to drive on. If we had it graded with a tractor before the cold set in, the road was firm and level. One cold Friday in February, after two weeks of sub-zero weather, two concrete trucks rumbled down our neatly plowed road and poured the slab underneath the building.

I got off work early and drove down the driveway fearfully, expecting to find a concrete truck up to its axles in frozen slush around every next curve. Two clean sets of tracks led in and out, and the concrete drivers never knew a thing.

Over the years our house had grown from a two-room A-frame to a three-story structure with a steep metal roof. The site became a clearing, the clearing became a yard, and poplars and poison ivy were replaced with fruit trees and daffodils. But we still didn’t have a good access road to it. So we decided to build one, with enough material that would hold up in any weather, during any season. That meant we needed solid materials—rocks, concrete, bricks, etc.—as the base of the road.



*This is the concrete block used to form the base layer of the road*



*This picture illustrates the height of the road, which is 4 to 6-feet deep in places.*

Harry began searching for suitable salvageable material. Whenever he saw a suitable building being demolished, Harry would ask the crew what they were doing with the rubble. Usually, they had a place to dump it. "Clean fill is not that hard to get rid of," Harry said. "If they can find another spot closer to dump it they will."

"Brick is the best," said a friend, explaining that another guy used a demolished brick building for the base of his road. He said, "Any kind of rubble from a foundation—concrete, brick, rocks—will work."

## The car wash

After years of "no's" Harry finally got a "yes." The company taking down a concrete and cinderblock car wash about 3½ miles from us agreed to dump the rubble in our roadway. It would end up to be about 60, 10-wheeler dump-truck loads, enough to do all 1400 feet of the road.

The dump trucks drove in as far as they could without sinking before dropping their loads of concrete, cinder block, and asphalt.

They blended it on purpose, dumping the larger rubble in first. The drivers tried to alternate the piles of material—big stuff, small stuff—to make the road work easier. While the

bulldozer driver worked at crushing down the piles, Harry looked for pieces of metal or rebar and pulled them out. "In 1400 feet I only had to cut the rebar flush with the concrete in two spots.

The dozer driver told Harry he'd done similar road work in the swamps in Vietnam. His technique was to drive back and forth on the rubble piles, crushing

and compacting them. It involved very little pushing or spreading.

"The big huge pieces of concrete are in the bottom," he said. "They're the base of the road. We tried to put the lighter stuff on top. It's a good firm road."

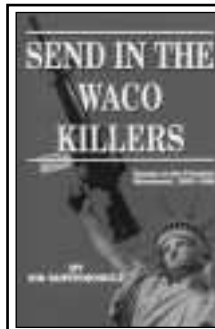
Dad visited us while the roadway was a long line of heaped rubble, stepping carefully between the chunks of cinder block and the dense brush on the side. He didn't comment, but asked me what I thought.

"I think it's nuts," I admitted, "But I thought the stunt with the concrete trucks was impossible too, and Harry pulled that off."

Two months later Dad was back, driving his little Saturn down the new, flat, dry road to the edge of our yard. The front and the back half of the road were done and the dozen piles of rubble that would make the parking area now stood in the place of some pickup trucks that had finally been hauled away.

His grizzled outdoorsman's face was a study as he got out of the car. He took a step, looked at the road, looked again.

"I didn't think it would work," he said. Then he stood straighter and waved a hand at the rubble piles: "What's this? Another car wash bites the dust?" Δ



## SEND IN THE WACO KILLERS

Three times the International Society of Newspaper Editors has included Vin Suprynowicz in their list of the 12 top weekly editorial writers in North America. For years his shoot-from-the-hip style has opened the eyes of thousands to government abuse of our liberties. In this book, *Send in the Waco Killers*, he blends material taken from his syndicated column with new commentary to give the reader a detailed, reporter's-eye-view of how the rights and freedoms of Americans are being subverted.

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# THE IRREVERENT JOKE PAGE

(Believing it is important for people to be able to laugh at themselves, this is a new feature in *Backwoods Home Magazine*. We invite readers to submit any jokes you'd like to share to *BHM*, P.O. Box 712, Gold Beach, OR 97444. There is no payment for jokes used.)

An Amish boy and his father were visiting a mall. They were amazed by almost everything they saw, but especially by two shiny, silver walls that could move apart and back together again.

The boy asked his father, "What is this, Father?" The father, never having seen an elevator, responded, "Son, I have never seen anything like this in my life; I don't know what it is."

While the boy and his father were watching wide-eyed, an old lady in a wheel chair rolled up to the moving walls and pressed a button. The walls opened and the lady rolled between them into a small room. The walls closed and the boy and his father watched small circles of lights with numbers above the walls light up. They continued to watch the circles light up in the reverse direction. The walls opened up again and a beautiful 24-year old woman stepped out.

The father said to his son, "Go get your mother."

Four Catholic women were sitting around sipping coffee. The first woman said, "My son is a priest. Whenever he walks into a room, people say, 'Good morning, Father.'" The second woman said, "Well, my son is a Bishop, and whenever he walks into a room, people say, 'Good morning, Your Grace.'" The third woman said, "My son is a Cardinal, and when he walks into a room, everyone says, 'Good morning, Your Eminence.'" The fourth woman sat quietly drinking her coffee, until the other three finally said, "Well, how about your son?" She answered, "Well, my son is 6' 2", broad-shouldered, handsome, with dark hair and blue eyes, and whenever he walks into a room, the women all say, 'Oh my God!'"

Submitted by Walter Scott Hughes

## News you may have missed

Submitted by Montey R. Eldridge

- The average cost of rehabilitating a seal after the Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska was \$80,000. At a special ceremony, two of the most expensively saved animals were released back into the wild amid cheers and applause from onlookers. A minute later they were both eaten by a killer whale.
- A woman came home to find her husband in the kitchen, shaking frantically with what looked like a wire running from his waist towards the electric kettle. Intending to jolt him away from the deadly current, she whacked him with a handy plank of wood by the back door, breaking his arm in two places. A shame, as he had merely been listening to his walkman.
- Two animal rights protesters were protesting at the cruelty of sending pigs to a slaughterhouse in Bonn. Suddenly the pigs, all two thousand of them, escaped through a broken fence and stampeded, trampling the two hapless protesters to death.
- Iraqi terrorist, Khay Rahnajet, didn't pay enough postage on a letter bomb. It came back with "**RETURN TO SENDER**" stamped on it. You've guessed it; he opened it and said a fond farewell to his face.
- Police in Los Angeles had good luck with a robbery suspect who just couldn't control himself during a lineup. When detectives asked each man in the lineup to repeat the words, "Give me all your money or I'll shoot," the man shouted, "That's not what I said!"

It is two o'clock in the morning and a husband and his wife are asleep when suddenly the phone rings.

The husband picks up the phone and says, "Hello? How the heck do I know? What am I, the weather man?" promptly slamming the phone down.

His wife rolls over and asks, "Who was that?"

The husband replies, "I don't know, it was some guy who wanted to know if the coast was clear."

# THE IRREVERENT JOKE PAGE

Recently reported in the Massachusetts Bar Association Lawyers Journal, the following are questions actually asked of witnesses by attorneys during trials and, in certain cases, the responses given by insightful witnesses:

1. "Now doctor, isn't it true that when a person dies in his sleep, he doesn't know about it until the next morning?"
2. "The youngest son, the twenty-year old, how old is he?"
3. "Were you present when your picture was taken?"
4. "Were you alone or by yourself?"
5. "Was it you or your younger brother who was killed in the war?"
6. "Did he kill you?"
7. "You were there until the time you left, is that true?"
8. "How many times have you committed suicide?"
9. Q: "So the date of conception (of the baby) was August 8th?"  
A: "Yes."  
Q: "And what were you doing at that time?"
10. Q: "She had three children, right?"  
A: "Yes."  
Q: "How many were boys?"  
A: "None."  
Q: "How many were girls?"
11. Q: "You say the stairs went down to the basement?"  
A: "Yes."  
Q: "And these stairs, did they go up also?"
12. Q: "All your responses must be oral, OK? What school did you go to?"  
A: "Oral."
13. Q: "Do you recall the time that you examined the body?"  
A: "The autopsy started around 8:30 p.m."  
Q: "And Mr. Dennington was dead at the time?"  
A: "No, he was sitting on the table wondering why I was doing an autopsy."
14. Q: "You were shot in the fracas?"  
A: "No, I was shot midway between the fracas and the navel."

## European News Note

**T**he European Commission has just announced an agreement whereby the official language of the European Union (EU) will now be English, rather than German which was the other possibility. As part of the negotiations, Her Majesty's Government conceded that English spelling had some room for improvement and has accepted a five-year phase in plan that will be known as "EuroEnglish."

In the first year, "S" will replace the soft "C." Certainly, this will make the sivil servants skip with joy. The hard "C" will be dropped in favor of the "K." This should klear up konfusion and keyboards kan have one less letter.

In the sekond year, there will be growing publik enthusiasm when the troublesome "PH" will be replaced with the "F." This will make words like fotograf 20% shorter.

In the third year, publik akseptanse of the new spelling kan be expected to reach the stage where more komplikated changes are possible. Government will enkorage the removal of double letters, which have always been a deterrent to akurate speling. Also, al wil agre that the horrible mes of the silent "E" in the languag is disgrasful, and they should go away.

By the 4th yar, peopl wil be reseptiv to steps such as replasing "TH" with "Z" and "W" with "V."

During ze fifz yar, ze unesenary "O" kan be dropd from vords kontain- ing "OU" and similar changs vud of kurs be aplid to ozer kombinations of leters.

After zis fifz yar, ve vil hav a reli sensible riten styl. Zer vil be no mor trubls or difikultis and evrivun wil find it ezi tu understand ech ozer.

**ZE DREM VIL FINALI KUM TRU!!!**

*Submitted By Bob Riley*

## California Radio Show Excerpt

*Submitted By Rep. Bob Riley (R-Calif.)*

**Female newscaster:** "So, Mr. Jones, what are you going to do with these children on this adventure holiday?"

**Mr. Jones:** "We're going to teach them climbing, canoeing, archery, shoot- ing..."

**Female newscaster:** "Shooting! That's a bit irresponsible, isn't it?"

**Mr. Jones:** "I don't see why; they'll be properly supervised on the range."

**Female newscaster:** "Don't you admit that this is a terribly dangerous activ- ity to be teaching children?"

**Mr. Jones:** "I don't see how, we will be teaching them proper range disci- pline before they even touch a firearm."

**Female newscaster:** "But you're equipping them to become violent killers."

**Mr. Jones:** "Well, you're equipped to be a prostitute, but you're not one, are you?"

## Cash in on those windfalls

By Robert L. Williams

In modern parlance a windfall is thought of as a sudden or unexpected gain or advantage, but the older meaning (and the true one, literally speaking) is something, such as fruit or tree limbs or even entire trees, blown down by the wind.

It's this second meaning that brings in more unexpected money than you would believe—that is, unless you suddenly have to hire someone to cut and remove some windfall from your own yard!

First, let's be sure we are all singing from the same page. In your community there is a windstorm or thunderstorm resulting in downed or broken trees. You've seen it dozens of times: a once-stately oak or poplar tree, (or any other kind, for that matter) that once shaded half a yard now lies like a gigantic corpse stretched across yard, shrubs, car ports, or even part of the house.

What is the owner of the property to do? He has only a few choices, other than selling the house and moving away, or waiting for the tree to decay and fall off the structure. He can drag out his chain saw and start cutting away at the tree, and perhaps risk a heart attack from the unusual exertion, injury from kick-back (because these trees often have limbs bent and under great stress), strained muscles, or further damage to the lawn, house, garage, or power lines. Or he can hire someone to remove the tree for him.

That's where you come in. If you have a good chain saw, a

few basic pieces of equipment, some spare time, and a use for some pretty significant dollars, you can take the following steps.

First, be sure that you know how to use your chain saw. I do not mean that you know how to cut up a few small saplings for an occasional fire or that you can cut up a small fallen tree. I mean that you need to know how to



*When you are in the tree, you must work with great care. The many limbs create kick-back hazards, and although you are supported by a strong rope, if the saw kicks back it can slice the rope in an instant. A small chain saw is good for jobs where you must hang on with one hand and cut with the other.*

cut limbs under the stress spoken of earlier; that you can under-cut and at times even cut one-handed; and that you are well-versed in the dangers of kickback, of limbs that swing and fall suddenly or in other ways attack you.

Second, you need to be in reasonably good shape. This does not mean that you have the energy and stamina to walk to the mailbox and back; it means that you can take sustained effort, reasonably great exertion, and toughness.

Third, you must be disciplined. Once you start a job, no matter how discouraging it may become, you need to stick with it to its satisfactory conclusion.

Fourth, you need to have free time. If the property owner hires you to do the job, he wants it done quickly. He will become understandably impatient if you start to work on the first of the month and three weeks later the tree is still half-harvested.

Fifth, you must be thorough. Do not cut and haul off the perfect-sized parts of the tree and leave the stump and twigs and small branches lying all over the lawn. Don't abandon the huge knotty portions of the tree simply because you can't split them without extra effort.

Sixth, be certain, before you show up for work, to have a total and complete understanding of the work you are expected to do. If the home-owner wants only the huge trunk of the tree cut and removed, be sure that you both know that. Get it in writing if there is a real danger of miscommunication.

Perhaps the owner wants the firewood for himself. If so, set your price accordingly. And then learn how he wants the wood handled. Does he want the trunk cut into firewood lengths so that later he can split and stack them? Does he want

you to do both the splitting and stacking?

What about the smaller twigs and branches? Does he want these removed, or will he handle that part of the job? Does he want the branches chipped into mulch? If so, can you do that part of the work? What about the sawdust? There will be a considerable amount of it, and you need to have it understood that you will (or will not) remove as much of the sawdust as possible.

Now you are ready, once all the details have been resolved, to talk money. But how much you charge will depend largely on a series of factors.

Is the tree easily accessible, or is it in the grove of trees behind the house? Will you need a tractor or other equipment to clear the way to the tree? Are there electrical lines involved? Will you need to buy special pieces of equipment in order to do the work?

Let's take the easiest scenario. A gigantic oak tree has blown over and has fallen across the man's yard. No buildings or shrubs are involved. It's a pure and simple job of cutting the tree into pieces and hauling it away. The owner does not want any of the wood or mulch. He just wants the tree trunk and larger limbs removed.

What will you charge? A good price is \$350 for the actual cutting and hauling work.

How much time should you allow? This is a good two-day job, so agree to have the job completed within a week. Allow yourself a little leeway in case of illness, bad weather, or personal emergencies.

Then go to work. Cut off all the limbs that you can reach, and, as soon as one is cut loose from the tree, cut into firewood lengths. You might even be able to cut some of the limbs into firewood lengths while they are still attached to the trunk. The reason for cutting the limbs into firewood is obvious—don't leave anything underfoot that will cause you to stumble and fall. It is even a good idea to stack the

wood in a convenient location so that when you are ready to load it, all you need to do is back the truck to the stack and toss the wood into the bed of the truck.

When you are ready to harvest the trunk, you will need to do one or two things: first, cut the trunk into workable sections, if you can do so without digging the tip of your saw into the dirt. Second, you may need to raise the trunk slightly so that you can put a block of wood (or section of a limb or branch) under it so that you can saw safely.

If you are working alone, you may be able to finish the job in a day or day and a half, even though you made your price estimate based on two full days of work. Be sure the owner knows that this is possible. Don't let him try to adjust the price downward because the job didn't take as long as he thought it would. You should not be penalized because you worked harder and longer than you originally thought.

When you get a truckload of wood cut, load it and haul it away to your own property. Be sure to take the chain saw and small pieces of equipment with you so that someone passing by does not decide to help himself to your property.

The reason for hauling wood as it is cut is that you avoid the dangers of having someone carry off the remaining wood while you are hauling away the first load.

**Another job:** a huge tree is in the way and the owner wants it cut down and hauled away. Your job is now considerably more involved than that of simply cutting up a fallen tree. You have to drop the tree before you can cut it up, and there is a danger that the



*Sometimes the apparently rotted tree you take down contains great wood. Look at these logs cut from two gigantic oaks that had been lightning struck. Except for an inch or so of pulp around the outside, the rest of the logs are great for firewood or lumber. These jewels will soon be oak boards from 5-inches to more than a foot wide and up to 16-feet long.*

tree may fall on valuable shrubs or other property.

Your price is no longer \$350. It is at least \$400 and perhaps \$425. You must not only drop the tree but you must drop it with great care. Pay yourself the extra \$50 or \$75 to run the risk of injury and the extra work of getting the tree down.

**New scenario:** there is a huge oak tree that has been struck by lightning and has died standing. Over a period of months the limbs have fallen away and the trunk has started to decay. How much should you charge?

If you must cut down the tree, and if there is the danger that the tree is so rotted that there is a danger that the tree top may break and fall upon you, the price goes to \$500. You should raise the price even more if the tree is on a hillside or is leaning one way and

you need to drop it against the laws of gravity.

You can make similar price adjustments if the characteristics of the job are truly challenging. If the tree is a sapling that you can cut and then slice into firewood, you can charge \$75 and still earn a nice day's pay for a couple of hours of work.

If the owner wants to keep the firewood and mulch, charge him more. After all, you can use the firewood to great advantage by either using it to heat your home or you can sell it and add to your profits. You can sell a pick-up load of good firewood for \$50 fairly easily. You can move it rapidly at \$35 to \$45 per load.

Think about this for a moment. You charge \$350 for cutting up the tree, and you get four or five truckloads of firewood from it. You sell four loads of wood at \$45 per load. That's another \$180 you earned, to be added to the \$350, for a total of \$530 for one or two days of pretty intensive work.

If you use the wood to heat your own house, you don't get any extra pay, but you get nearly free heat. In our house, which is a three-level structure of 4,300 square feet, we heated all this past winter for less than \$300. There have been winters in which our heating bill was less than \$25. So you are still realizing a super financial windfall.

None of the prices listed above will reflect the cost of removing the tree stump. If the owner wants that done, you can add at least \$200 to the fee.

The next questions are basic ones. First, will people actually pay this amount of money to have a tree cut and removed? The answer is a definite yes. While you are not trying to scalp people, keep in mind that you are using two full days of your life to help

a property owner out of a problem that was none of your doing. For what price would you sell two days of your life? Or, if you worked at minimum wage for two days, at eight or ten hours a day, you would earn \$100 just for bagging groceries or doing other less-strenuous work. And I will guar-

antee you that while bagging the groceries is demanding, it cannot compare with the exertion needed to use a chain saw and splitting maul or with carrying chunks of heavy green wood. And there is not the danger involved in most jobs that you find in chain-sawing.

answer is yes, if there are trees in your area. Where there are trees, there is inevitable tree damage. Sooner or later, every tree in the forest will die from wind damage, lightning, insect damage, or other causes. If nothing else happens, the tree will die of old age.

And whenever a tree dies in someone's yard, someone must deal with the tree, and it might as well be you. Some tree harvesters or cutters stay busy all the time, particularly during winter months. Many turn down business because there isn't enough time for them to handle the work load.

So there is an abundance of opportunities in most parts of the country. And if you get into the tree-trimming or cutting business pretty deeply, you will want to add a smaller chain saw for the tiny limbs, perhaps a chipper, a come-along or power pull, some chains, ropes, or cable, and whatever else you find that you need for the more difficult jobs.

Be sure to wear a hard hat, steel-toed boots, and gloves at all times. In summer be alert to the dangers of snakes, wasps, hornets, spiders, rats, bats, and other biting critters. In winter as well as summer, be aware of the dangers of kick-back, breaking or broken limbs, and rotted branches.

If you do good work, you can pick up from \$350 to \$800

on a fairly good week. One harvester or tree-remover that we know has expanded his work to include tree-trimming, and he earns as much as \$2,500 to \$3,000 per week, before expenses. He has a small crew working for him, and he has invested in special equipment, so his take-home pay is considerably reduced, but even if he keeps only \$1,000 a week for himself, that's not peanuts. Δ



*Keep one eye on the weather. Notice the storm clouds just behind the trimmer. Lightning and high winds can cause catastrophe.*

Second, can you find enough business to pay you to buy a good chain saw and other equipment? Again, the

## Whole-grain sourdough recipes

By Jennifer Stein Barker

**S**ourdough is an American tradition. When the pioneers came west with neither refrigeration nor “active dry yeast,” sourdough provided a reliable source of leavening for breads. Kept in a crock, it had to be used and replenished every few days or it would spoil. It often picked up wild bacteria from the air, which could either enhance the flavor or introduce harmful spoilage. If the starter (or “sponge,” as many called it) spoiled, it could be multiplied and divided among friends so that each had their own again. This provided insurance against a whole community’s losing their source of leavening.

With refrigeration and convenient packaged yeast products, sweet bread is quick and easy to make in these times, but sourdough has a nostalgic appeal for many people. For some, like me, it also has a flavor appeal. I love the slightly tangy taste it gives to bread. No pancakes are as fluffy and moist as sourdough pancakes, and no bagels as chewy and smooth-textured as sourdough bagels. Give these recipes a try and see if you don’t agree with me that sourdough is better than ever!

### My favorite starter

Make sure you get a yogurt with active cultures (it will say on the package) such as Nancy’s or Mountain High.

1 cup nonfat milk (reconstituted powdered is fine)  
1 teaspoon dry yeast  
3 Tbsp. plain unflavored yogurt with live cultures  
1 cup all-purpose whole wheat flour (or a blend of bread & pastry flours)

#### Method:

Place the milk in a glass, plastic, or stainless steel bowl, and set the bowl in a pan of hot water until the milk is 95 degrees. Dissolve in the yeast, then stir in the yogurt and flour until you have a smooth batter. Cover the container with plastic wrap or a lid with a small vent hole punched in it. Do not cover tightly, as this starter is going to be very active for several days. Set the starter in a warm place to work.

The starter will be active and bubbly, but should not form any black, blue/green, or pink spots. If it does, these indicate spoilage, and you should throw it away and start over. In three or four days, the wild bubbling should subside and the starter will settle down, perhaps forming a clear liquid on top. This separation is not a problem, and the starter should just be stirred back together before use.

Once your starter has calmed down and smells good and sour, you are ready to feed it and work with it. It will develop more complex flavor and become more reliable with frequent use over time. The evening before you want to use it, take your starter out of the refrigerator and bring it to room temperature. Look at the recipe you intend to use, and decide how much starter you need to make.

Add warm (95 degree) water or milk, and flour, in equal parts. Figure that one cup each of liquid and flour will make 1½ cups of additional starter. Use all-purpose flour or a blend of bread and pastry flour.

Add the required amount of milk and flour, and set the starter in a warm place until it has bubbled and soured (overnight or 8 hours is usually enough). If liquid separates out from the starter, this is perfectly OK. Just stir it back in, then remove the amount required in the recipe and set aside the remainder to save for next time.

In between uses, keep your starter in the refrigerator. Keep it in a nonreactive container like glass or plastic, as the acid which makes it taste sour will react with some metals and cause off-taste and color. You should use your starter every two weeks or so, or at least pour some out, feed it again, and let it bubble before returning to the refrigerator. The yeasties in discarded starter will benefit both your septic tank and your compost pile.

**Hint:** If you do not have a warm place in which to sour your starter, try putting the container in a box with a towel in the bottom and a few jars of 95-degree water tucked in with it to keep it warm. Place a pillow or towel over the top to keep the heat in.

**Hint:** I like to keep an extra 2 cups of starter in the refrigerator container so that I can have sourdough pancakes on impulse. It saves having to think of feeding the starter the evening before I want them. A one quart yogurt container with a tiny hole punched in the lid is the perfect size for this.

### Sourdough whole wheat bread

A tasty, chewy loaf, somewhat larger than a standard loaf of bread.

**Makes one peasant loaf:**

¼ cup warm water  
2 tsp. yeast  
1 tsp. honey  
2 cups sourdough starter  
3-4 cups whole wheat bread flour  
coarse cornmeal

**Method:**

Dissolve the yeast and honey in the warm water and let sit in a warm place for about 10 minutes until it foams up. This is called “proofing” the yeast. If it does not foam up, get fresh yeast and try again.



Add the starter to the proofed yeast. Add the first cup of bread flour and beat the dough well until it looks smooth and satiny and comes together in glutenous strands. Add more flour ½ cup at a time, beating well with each addition, until the dough is stiff enough to knead.

Turn the dough out onto a floured board and knead 8 to 10 minutes, until the dough springs back vigorously from an impression. Place the dough in an oiled bowl, turning once to coat the top. Cover and place in a warm spot to rise until doubled in bulk (about 1 to 1½ hours). Prepare a cookie sheet or a pan at least 7x11 inches by oiling it and sprinkling it lightly with cornmeal. Punch the dough down and let rest a minute, then turn out of the bowl and form into one oblong loaf. Place the loaf on the prepared pan. Cover and let rise until doubled in bulk.

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Brush the top of the loaf with a little water. Bake 40 to 45 minutes, until the crust is golden and the loaf tests done. Cool the loaf thoroughly before storing in an airtight container.

## **Pain Rustique (rustic bread)**

A traditional bread and a nice combination of flavors.

**Makes two 5x9-inch loaves:**

2 cups warm water  
1 Tbsp. yeast  
1 tsp. honey  
1½ cups sourdough starter  
3 Tbsp. oil  
3 Tbsp. honey  
1½ tsp. salt  
3 Tbsp. gluten flour (optional)  
3 cups rye flour  
3 cups whole wheat bread flour  
wheat flour to knead

**Method:**

In a large bread bowl, dissolve the yeast in the warm water with the honey. Allow to sit in a warm place 10 min-

utes until it foams up. Add the sourdough starter, oil, 3 Tbsp. honey, and salt. Stir well to combine. Add the gluten flour, if using, and 1 cup each of the rye and wheat flours. Beat well. Add rye and wheat flours in equal amounts until the dough is stiff enough to knead.

Knead 10 minutes, until the dough is very smooth and elastic. Place the dough in a clean, oiled bowl, and turn to oil the top. Cover and let rise until doubled, about 1½ hours. Form into 2 loaves and place in two oiled 5x9-inch loaf pans. Let rise until doubled, about 45 minutes.

Bake in a preheated 350 degree oven for 35-40 minutes, or until the loaves test done. Cool 10 minutes in the pan, then remove to racks and cool thoroughly before storing.

## **Pumpernickel bagels**

These bagels are made of classic dark, sour dough. Caraway seeds are optional.

**Makes 16 good-sized bagels:**

1 cup lukewarm water  
1 Tbsp. yeast  
½ tsp. honey  
1 ½ cups sourdough starter  
2 Tbsp. oil  
2 Tbsp. dark molasses  
2 tsp. salt  
1 egg  
2 tsp. caraway seeds (optional)  
2 Tbsp. gluten flour (optional)  
2-3 cups whole wheat bread flour  
2-3 cups rye flour  
2 quarts boiling water with 1 tsp. honey dissolved in it

**Method:**

In a bread bowl, dissolve the yeast in the warm water with the ½ tsp. honey. Allow to sit 10 minutes, or until the yeast foams up. Then add the sourdough starter, oil, dark molasses, salt, eggs, and caraway seeds (if using). Beat well.

Add the gluten flour, if using, and 1 cup each of the wheat flour and rye flour. Beat well until gluten strands form. Continue adding alternate ½ cups of wheat and rye flour until the dough is too stiff to add any more.

Turn the dough out onto a floured board, and knead for 10 minutes or until it is smooth and springs back from an impression. Place dough in a clean oiled bowl. Turn dough to oil the top, cover, and let rise in a warm place until doubled, about 1 or 2 hours.

Turn the dough out onto the board again, knead briefly, and form bagels as follows: divide the dough into 16 equal pieces. Roll each piece into a rope long enough to go around your hand. Seal the ends of the rope together by

overlapping, pinching, etc. Make as many as will fit a single layer in the pan of boiling water.

Have your oven preheated to 375 degrees, and two large oiled cookie sheets ready. Drop the bagels into the boiling water with the ½ tsp. honey added. Boil one minute on each side, then remove, drain well, and place on an oiled cookie sheet. When the cookie sheet is full, slide it into the oven and bake for 25-30 minutes, until the bagels are done. Continue until all of your bagels are boiled and baked, and remove the bagels to a rack to cool.

## Sourdough hazelnut pancakes

This recipe makes enough substantial, nutty-flavored pancakes to feed four hungry pancake-eaters.

**Makes about sixteen 4-inch pancakes:**

2 cups whole wheat sourdough starter  
2 eggs  
2 Tbsp. oil  
1 cup whole wheat bread flour  
⅓ cup ground hazelnuts\*  
½ tsp. soda  
½ tsp. baking powder  
approx. ½ cup milk or water

### Method:

Whisk together the starter, eggs and oil. Add enough milk or water to make a runny batter, whisking well to blend. In a small bowl, stir together the flour, ground nuts, soda, and baking powder until thoroughly blended. Combine the two mixtures, whisking until completely combined. It is not necessary to beat down the bubbles which form. If the batter is too thick to spread on the griddle, it may be thinned with additional milk or water. If too thin, just add a little more flour.

Heat a griddle or skillet on medium-high until a drop of water thrown on the surface will sizzle. Oil the griddle lightly, then pour or ladle batter on the griddle to make pancakes the size you want. Cook each pancake until bubbles

form on the top, and the edges begin to set up. Flip and cook on the other side until golden on both sides.

Serve immediately with warm maple syrup.

\* To grind hazelnuts, place ⅓ cup nuts in blender and pulse just until ground to a coarse cornmeal consistency. Do not worry about a few chunks. If you go too far, you will get nut butter. It is not necessary to peel the nuts, but if you prefer them with the skins removed, you may toast them in a 350 degree oven for 10 minutes. The skins will then rub off. Δ

### Harbor

My son takes me by the hand, leads me out  
into the dark yard. "See," he points, his shadow hand  
against the stars, "there's Mars." It's orange-  
red, all right. Toads and frogs fill the night  
with their mad relief songs of winter gone.  
He recites a litany: Procyon,  
Aldeberan, Regulus, Arcturus.  
He tells me of the Bear, how the Irish  
have named it the Plough, that the first two stars  
point to Polaris. I enjoy him,  
him teaching me as my father did.  
He is as pleased with his stars as the frogs  
are with spring. He ends, "My starbook says  
our galaxy is a hundred thousand  
light years long." We deplore our country's lack  
of funding for the space program. He leaves  
for a piece of pie before bed; I call  
my thanks, stand surveying the immensity.  
Tomorrow I am fifty-one. How quickly  
I ran those years. I look about me, see  
lights of neighbors' farms, my own windows bright,  
am glad someone wants to voyage the stars  
but is contented just now with pie.

*By Jim Thomas  
Hermann, Montana*



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## Squirrel surprise

By Grace Petrisin

One day, after coming home from a neighbor's, I walked in the house and my mother's face was shining. "You'll never guess what Dad brought home," she said.

By the look on Mom's face, I knew it was something terrific. I bubbled up with excitement. What could it be? She pointed to a bucket on the counter and put a finger to her lips. Right away I thought there was a toad inside, but why would Dad bring home a toad? I tiptoed to the bucket and looked in. There lay three baby



*Grace, age 10, feeds the babies milk from an eye dropper.*

squirrels. Their heads looked big for their bodies and their eyes weren't even open yet. They had gray backs and pink bellies with a brown edge separating the gray from the pink. Their tails were long and rat-like.

Dad told us how he got the squirrels. A work crew had cut down a tree and there was a squirrel nest at the top. The mother got scared and left the babies behind. Dad decided to bring them home.

We fed the babies milk that night from an eyedropper. The next morning Mom called the vet to find out how to care for them. The vet told us to get puppy formula from an Agway store and to feed them a couple of millimeters every few hours. We also put them in a box with a heating pad turned on low underneath a couple of towels. After feeding the babies we had to wipe their behinds gently with a damp cotton ball to stimulate them to go to the bathroom.

Later on we figured our squirrels were four to five weeks old. There were two boys and a girl. We named the boys Max and Pete. The girl was mine and I named her Daisy. As the squirrels grew, so did their personalities.



*Guess what dad brought home!*

Daisy was well-behaved and loved to snuggle. Pete was the runt of the litter. He was ragged looking and weaker than the other two. Mom took special care of him. Max was the big eater. He was the messiest eater too. He



*At nine weeks the squirrels began to eat solid foods.*



*Me and Daisy in a tree*

drank the formula so fast that it would come out of his nose in a big sneeze. Max belonged to my brother, Ben.

That week we went to the library to research gray squirrels. We learned these facts: Three to ten squirrels are born to a litter. The babies open their eyes at six weeks and at ten weeks they are weaned from their mother.

We had the squirrels nine days when they began to open their eyes. They were eating more formula and still sleeping a lot but they began moving around a little.



*Max, Pete, and Daisy*

At eight weeks the babies looked like miniature squirrels. Their fur had grown in more, and their ratty tails started to bush out. They were eating a lot more but not as often—four to six millimeters every four to five hours. We began to feed them with a syringe rather than an eyedropper because it held more. The squirrels were getting active and crawled around in the cardboard box. One night Pete got out and we could not find him. Mom said he would probably turn up in the morning and, sure enough, he did. When Dad got up for work, he found Pete



*Max rests in Ben's pocket.*

standing in the middle of the living room floor. We decided to move them all to a wire cage.

After another week the squirrels were climbing the cage and began to eat solid food. We started them on apples.

At ten weeks the three, frisky animals grew restless so we let them out of the cage to explore the house. Max and Daisy played on a clothes rack that we had inside. It looked like they were playing hide and seek as they darted between T-shirts, underwear, and socks. Sometimes they knocked the clothes down. When they got tired, the squirrels wanted to burrow in our arms or under our necks. Max always climbed into Dad's sleeve to fall asleep.

The time finally came when we let the squirrels outside. The first few days they didn't wander too far. But after awhile, they were climbing trees in the yard. At this point they were eating peanuts and corn. They loved corn on the cob and were soaked by the time they finished one.

Eventually they all left to live as squirrels are meant to live—wild. But Max stuck around the longest. When my family sat on the front porch Max would come dancing across the lawn, jump onto the railing, and then spring to someone's head or shoulder. He loved to wrestle and would usually attack my hand. As I twirled him on his back, he would grab for my fingers but he never bit any of us hard.

Max slept in a big maple tree at the edge of our property. When Ben and I



*My brother, Ben, plays with Max.*

climbed the tree Max came down from the highest branches to play with us.

Raising squirrels is hard work but it is worth it. They make great pets and



*Max would come dancing across the lawn, jump onto the railing of the porch, and then spring to someone's head or shoulder.*

you don't have to housebreak them. It's sad when they finally leave, but they're a lot of fun while they stick around. Δ

*(Author Grace Petrisin is 10 years old)*

## Think of it this way...

*By John Silveira*

### If we can't throw out our outmoded Constitution, then let's have the NBA run the U.S. government

Oh, how I hate deadlines. I'm the great procrastinator. I've turned putting things off into a fine art. My obituary will be in the papers for weeks—perhaps months—before I get around to dying. The undertaker will be waving my death certificate in my face saying, "Silveira, get in the casket."

Dave Duffy, the guy who publishes this magazine, knows what I'm like. He's learned to ask for oral progress reports to see how far along I've gotten with my article. And I've learned to lie to him about it. Monday, I said I was a quarter done, but I hadn't even started. The next day I said I was half done and all I did was stare at the computer monitor for 10 minutes before I did something else. Today is Saturday and Dave thinks I'm polishing up the finished product. But this is as far as I've gotten.

Dave's friend, O.E. MacDougal, the poker player who's helped me with a lot of my articles, is up for the weekend. He wants to get in some fishing. Because it's deadline, the rest of us are busier than pickpockets at a kangaroo convention.

I was hoping MacDougal would give me some ideas, but instead he fell asleep on the floor by the fax machine. Mac can sleep anywhere. While he dozed, a guy named Nelson, who drops in from time to time just to let us know what he thinks is wrong with the world, came into the office.

He said hello and looked at some of the back issues of the magazine sitting on Dave's desk. "I've got to read this rag you guys put out sometime," he said and laughed.

"So, how's it going?" I asked and realized my mistake because he start-

ed giving me the details of his life over the last week, and I just didn't have time for a social visit.

I tried to ignore him and went back to work. Then he asked, "Who's the guy on the floor?"

"That's MacDougal," I said.

"O.E. MacDougal, the poker player?"

"Yeah. You know him?"

"I've heard Dave talk about him. I'd like to see how he'd do in the game we play down at the club," he sneered.

Mac didn't stir.

"What do you guys play for?" I asked.

"We play half-dollar limit. But we'd play for anything he wants," he said with a wave of his hand. With the other hand he dropped a copy of one of the California papers on my desk. "By the way, have you seen this?" he asked.

I looked at the paper, but I wasn't sure what he was talking about. He got impatient when I didn't comment and let his finger fall on a story there.

"Look at all these anti-government groups. They're saying they love this country but hate the government. How can they say that? How can you pretend to love this country but say the government is bad?"

I didn't say anything. To get rid of him I went back to work but he wasn't to be dissuaded.

"How can they be against the government? These people drive on the roads, drink the water, use and take advantage of the Constitution the government has provided us, then they turn around and say they hate the government."

"I don't think the roads or water are what they're complaining about," I



*John Silveira*

said, even though I realized that by joining his conversation I was going to prolong his visit.

"It's all or nothing," he said.

"I suppose that's one way of looking at it," I replied. "But that very Constitution guarantees that they have the right to say those things."

"Yeah, constitutional guarantees," he mumbled. "That's where guys like that like to hide—behind the Bill of Rights."

I shrugged and tried to get back to work.

"That's the problem in this country," he said, "Criminals, foreigners, and political fringe groups try to hide behind the Bill of Rights. It protects them like they were endangered species. Even known criminals get away with using the Constitution against us."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Once we know someone's a criminal the police shouldn't need search warrants and stuff like that. Just get them out of society. The Bill of Rights is meant for law abiding citizens, not

hoods—or foreigners. I don't know what the problem is."

"The problem is the whole Bill of Rights is screwed up," a voice said.

It was Mac. He was up on one arm looking at us.

"Did we wake you up?" I asked.

He stood up without answering.

"It's not screwed up," Nelson said.

"It's just the way lawbreakers and political wackos try to hide behind it."

"And that's because it's screwed up. The whole Bill of Rights should be thrown out. Too many people have hidden behind it for too long. Fortunately, there are politicians and bureaucrats all around the country who are putting a stop to it," he said and walked to the kitchen and started looking through the cupboards.

"Where's the coffee, John?" he yelled to me.

"I think we're out."

He glanced at me and his eyes got bigger. "You can't be," he said and started opening one cupboard door after another, moving cans and boxes to see deeper into them.

"What do you mean they should be thrown out?" Nelson called. He was talking to Mac who finally stopped and took down a box of tea bags. He stared at them balefully in his hand.

"What do you call him?...Mac?" Nelson asked me.

I nodded.

"Mac, what do you mean it should be thrown out?" he asked again.

But Mac still didn't reply. He put the kettle on the stove and his hand moved as if to turn the heat on, but he didn't. Instead he turned around and came back into the room with us and said, "Caffeine—it's my addiction. But it's got to be in coffee." Then he proffered a hand to Nelson and said, "Hi, I'm Mac."

"Nelson," Nelson said as he shook it.

## **The Bill of Wrongs**

Mac sat down. "Well, Nelson," he began, "the Bill of Rights should have

been called the Bill of Wrongs. And though I'm sure that for their times the people who wrote them tried their best, I'm also sure that in the light of what's happening today even they would have to admit they didn't do a very good job. So, we've been fine-tuning and improving on their work ever since."

"I'll admit there are problems with the Bill of Rights..." Nelson began.

"Of course there are, not the least of which are that no one ever says what the source of these rights are. You have read the Constitution, haven't you?"

Nelson nodded but allowed, "It's been a few years."

"Does it say anywhere where we get these rights from?"

Nelson scratched his head. "I don't recall seeing anything about that."

"Because it's not there. They never even mention it. I think they just made them up. If they can't tell us who gave us these rights, then how do we know whether or not they're valid? Do they say we get them from God? The government? Ourselves? No, the implication is that we've had them all along, and that we all have them, white or black, Christian, Jew, or Moslem—even agnostics and atheists, if you can believe that, man or woman, American or foreigner, criminal or law abiding, as if one set of rights can fit everybody. This, of course, is patently ridiculous. If we have rights, we have to know where they came from; otherwise, how can we say they actually exist? And how can anyone believe foreigners have the same rights we do? In fact, should foreigners enjoy our rights if they come to our country?"

"Not necessarily," Nelson said.

"Of course they shouldn't. Just as Americans shouldn't be allowed free speech, the right to practice their religious freedom, or expect freedom from warrantless searches, or get speedy trials, or anything else like that when they go to foreign countries. Should they?"

Nelson frowned at that. "Well, Americans should be treated according to our rights no matter where we go."

"But we can't assume we have those rights when we're in someone else's country any more than foreigners should have rights when they're in ours."

He gave Nelson a chance to think that over.

"You know," Nelson began, "our rights are our rights. But now that I think of it, I think the rights in the Bill of Rights are supposed to belong to everyone. I mean, the Declaration of Independence says we're all endowed with certain unalienable rights—it doesn't say just Americans are. I think the guys who wrote the Bill of Rights thought everyone in the world is supposed to have these rights but that governments often deny them."

Mac scowled and said, "But not the way they wrote them. Take a look at these so-called rights," and he grabbed the World Almanac from the shelf. "When you read them, at first they seem pretty good, even though they were made up by a bunch of ancient people. They're flawed, but they can be straightened out without much effort."

## **Scrapping the First Amendment**

He held the almanac in one hand and rubbed his chin with the other. "But not the First Amendment," he said after looking into the book for a few seconds. "It's so deeply flawed it may be unrecoverable."

He looked at Nelson. "Are you following me?"

"What do you mean the *whole* First Amendment?" Nelson asked.

"Listen, and think about it as I read it," Mac said. He read:

**Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging**

**freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.**

"Does anyone really think you should be able to practice any religion you want at anytime you want?"

"Well," Nelson said, "freedom of religion is a pretty important thing."

"What about cults?" Mac asked.

"They're different."

"Of course they are. The Founding Fathers never dealt with cults. Thankfully, today we have a government that accepts more and more of the responsibility for deciding which religions should be allowed and which shouldn't."

"Look at what the government did on our behalf at Waco. There's no telling what those people would have done if the government hadn't stepped in. Although she's taken a lot of bad press, Attorney General Janet Reno will be remembered by future generations as the one person who helped us decide which religions should be practiced."

"Well, I didn't like the Branch Davidians, but I'm not sure it's up to the government to decide which..."

"You know," Mac interrupted. "It would also be a good idea if, in the future, people have to register as to what religion they belong to. We could weed out the religious nuts that way."

"No," Nelson said.

"Why not? It can't hurt, can it? If you're not doing anything wrong, why would you care if your religion was registered. It would be like the registration of a business. If you're not doing something wrong with your business, you shouldn't mind registering them."

"Well, I think I can agree with registering a business, but that's different from a religion."

"But by registering religions, if you belong to one of these fringe religious groups, it will let us keep an eye on

you—and there's nothing wrong with that unless you're doing something wrong."

"No, I don't think registering religions is such a good idea," Nelson said.

"Do you know how many religions there are?" Mac asked. "Just the number of Christian sects alone is staggering, and they're all waiting for Christ's return. Do you think we need all those religions? Some of them do things I'm sure neither you nor I approve of and I think there should be some kind of government body to oversee them."

"I don't think I'd like that. There's nothing wrong with freedom of religion," Nelson said.

"There isn't? Do you know how many people have deceived countless numbers of people over the years because they've claimed they're Jesus Christ? If Christ comes down here again, I don't think it's up to individuals to identify him. That should be left to the government, and I'm sure they'll let us know who he is. In the meantime, anyone pretending to know better than the authorities who God is and what he wants should be fined and imprisoned."

"Are you crazy?"

Mac looked hurt. "No. I'm just trying to protect people. The nut houses and jails are full of religious pretenders, and many of their followers have been hurt so I think the government should step in."

"Well, I'm sure those things can be ironed out," Nelson started to say, "but I'm sure I don't want the government..."

"You know," Mac interrupted, "I'm just trying to agree with you. People abuse the Bill of Rights and then when we go to deal with them, they hide behind those same rights. Now I get the feeling you want to side with them. We should have regulations so people can't hide. This will take care of the religious nuts. The good religions wouldn't have to worry about anything. They'd register themselves

and their members and just go on with their business."

"I don't know about this," Nelson said.

"Another troubling part of the First Amendment," Mac continued as if he hadn't noticed Nelson was still disagreeing with him, "is this so-called free speech. Now, I know the Founding Fathers meant well when they added this provision to the Bill of Rights, but they obviously didn't consider that by allowing certain people to say whatever they wanted, they could hurt someone's self-esteem. No one should be allowed to say anything that might hurt the feelings of women, blacks, Hispanics, gays, or anyone else, especially on college campuses."

"Is this guy for real?" Nelson asked me.

I didn't say anything. I was content to listen.

"Well," Nelson said to Mac, "people shouldn't be allowed to say things that aren't true about other people."

"Oh, I agree," Mac said, "but it's not always a case of whether it's true or not. It's often a matter of whether or not it hurts someone's feelings, especially on college campuses. Why should people be allowed free speech to hurt the feelings of minorities or women, for example? We should make clear once and for all the things we're allowed to have free speech about, and what speech should be regulated. Luckily, many colleges are taking care of that problem already."

"Which of course leads to that great law which I predict may one day become the cornerstone of America's legacy to civilization: Election finance reform. Why should anyone be able to have more free speech, just because they have money, than someone who's poor? It's only fitting that there should be government limits on how much money I can contribute to a candidate to get my message out."

"I'm in agreement with that," Nelson said.

"But you know, contributions to candidates isn't only in the form of

cash, cars, and office space, and I'm sure future politicians will realize that there's no reason why Garry Trudeau—you know, the guy who draws *Doonsbury*—Rush Limbaugh, George Will, Alexander Cockburn, and others have more free speech to back their candidates and causes than the rest of us. There should be limits on what commentators are able to say."

"Huh?" Nelson grunted.

"Those guys and their ilk are able to say more, to bigger audiences, than you or I. And what they say is worth bundles of dough. It's 'free' to the candidates and causes they support, but it's tantamount to a huge financial contribution you and I can't afford to make. If we're trying to limit the message cash contributors can have, we should be able to limit contributions that appear to be free, but actually are worth tens of thousands of dollars."

"But that would interfere with freedom of the press," Nelson protested.

"People are hiding behind freedom of the press in the Bill of Rights. If the Founding Fathers had had even one farsighted man among them, they might have realized that there should be controls to ensure no ideas get more free press than any other. This could be achieved by the licensing of newspapers..."

"No," Nelson said.

"...the same way they license television and radio stations," Mac continued. "That way, we would be guaranteed of the benefits of a fair press and addressing community concerns. TV and radio stations can lose their licenses for annoying the public because saying the right things is what freedom means, anyway. And the government and college administrations will tell us what the right things are."

"No," Nelson said. "We can't have politicians, bureaucrats, and college professors determining what we can say, and we can't have licensing of the press."

"Besides," Mac said, "if we don't have some kind of reforms, it could

someday cause problems for the approved political parties."

### Approved parties

Nelson looked at Mac in disbelief. "Approved political parties? We don't have *approved* political parties."

"Sure we do."

"Who are they?"

"The Democrats and Republicans."

"What do you mean they're the 'approved political parties?' Anyone can form a political party."

"But the Democrats and Republicans are the ones that get financial support from the government."

"What financial support?"

"For one thing, matching funds in presidential elections. You can only get matching funds from the government if you get a certain minimum number of votes. But no one gets those votes unless they're on the ballot and you can't get on the ballot unless the government approves you and no one is going to know who you are so you can get enough votes to be on the ballot unless you've got the money to advertise. So those matching funds are really subsidies for the two big parties who are automatically placed on the ballot. The only party other than the Democrats and Republicans that qualifies for those funds won't take them. That's those crazy Libertarians."

"Who are they?"

"They're the guys who want the Constitution strictly interpreted the way it was written. They're nothing but troublemakers. They oppose modern interpretations of the Constitution. Don't vote for them."

"And, by the way, the government has already decided that the Democrats and Republicans are the only ones who can benefit from the Fairness Doctrine. Anarchy could reign without the Fairness Doctrine."

"What's the Fairness Doctrine?" I asked.

"It says that a presidential candidate can't be denied radio or television time just because he hasn't got the money to buy it. But thankfully it only applies if you're a government approved political party. If you're a small party, or even just a little known candidate in the Democratic or Republican parties, fairness doesn't apply to you."

"Then it isn't fair," Nelson said.

"Now, neither the government financing of political parties nor the Fairness Doctrine were the creation of our shortsighted Founding Fathers," Mac said. "It is the creation of our more enlightened modern government."

"Is it even constitutional?" I asked.

"Not really. And that's the problem. It's the reason the Constitution needs reinterpretation. Thankfully we have politicians and bureaucrats taking care of the problem."

"But we've got to stay within the bounds of the Constitution," Nelson said.

"Can you imagine what a mess this country would be in if, instead of reinterpreting the Constitution, the government had to submit proposals to change it to the people and the states every time they wanted to do something the Founding Fathers didn't like?"

"That's bypassing the amendment process," Nelson said. "I know you're real happy with this reinterpretation crap, but the more I hear you talk about shortcomings in the Constitution, the more I like it as it is."

"Nelson, you've just got to realize we need more flexibility in the Constitution so we can deal with modern society's problems. You know, the Europeans, having older and wiser civilizations than ours, have often led the way with wise laws. For example, the Germans, to this day, only allow approved religions, and for years the Rumanian practiced the licensing of typewriters and mimeograph machines."

"I don't care what the Germans and the Rumanians do; I'm not ready to give up freedom of the press, speech, or religion," Nelson said.

"And computers!" Mac said as if suddenly inspired.

"What about computers?" Nelson asked.

"They should be registered too."

"Are you crazy? Why?"

"To keep track of troublemakers."

"But computers aren't a problem," Nelson said.

"Of course they're a problem. Look at the potential trouble they can cause. Even Clinton's pointed out that it may be possible for computer hackers to bring down the world's economy. So we've got to get the government to control the internet. And what's wrong with registering computers while we're at it?"

"Computers are part of our right to communicate."

"You can still do that if they're registered...and maybe licensed. The only people who would be bothered by it would be troublemakers. It's not going to affect those who behave."

Nelson rolled his eyes, then looked at me.

"If you're not doing anything wrong, what's your complaint?" Mac asked and looked back in the almanac.

## Getting rid of the Second Amendment

Mac continued, "Perhaps the most dangerous amendment in the Bill of Rights is the following:

**A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.**

"The Founding Fathers must have been out all night drinking when they thought this one up," Mac said. "You see, they wrote this Amendment because they didn't trust government. A little paranoid, wouldn't you say?"

"Well, they'd just overthrown one," Nelson said.

"Don't you trust our government?" Mac asked.

"It's not a question of whether or not I trust it."

"And do you see that word 'keep' in there?" Mac continued. "They actually thought the average person should be able to keep guns in his house. And the word 'bear?' They actually thought we should be able to carry them around. Well, government bodies at all levels have passed laws registering, restricting, and banning guns to make sure less and less of this happens every day. You don't have any problem with the progressive gun laws we have in this country, do you?"

"I don't know. I have a hunting rifle," Nelson said. "I think I should be allowed to keep that."

"Of course. And we should reword that amendment so it reflects the hunting and plinking rights of sportsmen everywhere."

"And I think we should be allowed guns for self-defense in our homes," Nelson said.

"That's a rather lame reason," Mac answered. "That's what we have the police for. You don't keep guns for self-defense, do you?"

"According to the law, and every court decision to date, the police are not legally obligated to protect us," Nelson said.

Mac waved his hand in disdain. "Do you think the police are going to let us down?"

Nelson shook his head and started to get up. "This is crazy. I gotta be going."

But Mac put his hand up and Nelson paused. "Let's see what the Third Amendment says." He shrugged. "No big deal there."

"But get a load of this next one—the Fourth Amendment. It makes me wonder just how subversive the Founding Fathers really were."

Nelson waited like a man waiting to get shot.

## Civil forfeiture

"Get this," Mac said. "They claimed:

**The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.**

"If I've said it once, I've say it a million times: 'If you haven't got something to hide, what do you have to worry about?' I'd be even more suspicious of a person who objected to the government coming into their houses and businesses. I mean, it would mean that they were hiding something."

"No it wouldn't. I don't want people just walking into my house," Nelson said.

"It's not just people; it's government people...and you'd get used to it. And only the bad guys would suffer from this. But don't worry, the government's already found ways to ignore this stupid amendment."

"What do you mean?" Nelson asked.

"Well, take the part about seizures. Now the government can take anything from the bad guys by doing something they used to do in England—they arrest property, including money, if they think there's a possibility you could be guilty of a crime. It's called civil forfeiture and it's become a perfect way around the Fourth Amendment. This way, there's no hearings, no warrants, and no court appearances because they're arresting property, and property doesn't have rights."

"How do they determine if you're guilty of a crime?" Nelson asked.

"Well, say you have too much money on you, you might be a drug dealer—especially if you fit one of

their profiles such as being too young to have much money or being black.”

“But how much is too much money?” Nelson asked.

Mac shrugged. “Whatever the cop who stops you thinks is too much.”

“I don’t believe this happens in this country,” Nelson said and looked at me.

“It does,” I said. “Has been ever since Reagan’s first administration with the passage of the Comprehensive Crime Control Act in 1984.”

“But it doesn’t make sense. How do we know if someone’s guilty so they can take the property?”

“They’re not saying you’re guilty. They’re saying your property or your money is guilty. They’re not arresting you, they’re arresting your property or your money. It’s that simple.”

“It sounds like Alice in Wonderland, and it’s not the way things should be,” Nelson said.

“Why not?”

“The police could come into your house anytime they wanted and take your property if they wanted.”

“But if you have nothing to hide, what’s the problem?”

“It seems like everything you’re saying is a recipe for tyranny,” Nelson said.

“But this makes it harder for people to hide behind their rights,” Mac said.

Nelson looked at me, then back at Mac. “I think you’re crazy.”

“Get a load of this next one,” Mac said. “It’s the Fifth Amendment.

**No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the Militia, when in actual service in time of War or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offence to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled**

**in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.**

*“One of the first things you’ve got to realize is that the Bill of Rights were intended as a limit on government. This was one of the mistakes our Founding Fathers made. But luckily what the government has managed to do, in our interest of course, is to turn that around and make it so that if a right isn’t mentioned in any of the Amendments, then we don’t have it. This has been done by being very quiet about the Ninth Amendment. Shh.”*

“Were those guys nuts when they came up with this one? Take just the private property issue. Private property may have been a good idea once, but now it’s an outmoded concept. Clinton’s former Secretary of Labor, Robert Reich, even said so on television a few years ago. I’m just glad that a guy that high up in government finally said so. And to save us the trouble of taking a vote or holding a Constitutional Convention or having to amend the Constitution to change this, folks in Clinton’s administration and at the Environmental Protection Agency have wisely pointed out that environmental and collective rights are more important than these outmoded old individual rights we’re supposed to have.”

“You’re wrong,” Nelson said. We need these rights.

“No, you’re wrong,” Mac said. “At this point we need to change the Constitution at all costs to deal with modern problems. Another good thing is that by ignoring this Amendment and the previous one we talked about, we can save police departments from going broke. Otherwise, crime will run rampant.”

“How can police departments go broke if we keep our rights?” Nelson asked.

“All that money from those property seizures is used by law enforcement. There are currently more than 250,000 civil forfeitures or property seizures every year. That’s 5,000 a week. In the beginning, the funds from seized property were intended to supplement police budgets so they could better fight crime. But you know how things work in the real world. There’s never enough money to go around, so as soon as police departments started getting money from civil forfeiture, other agencies asked why the police were getting all that extra money when things like libraries, fire departments, public works, and bureaucratic and politicians’ salaries are running on tight budgets? So, our wise politicians started cutting police budgets by the same amount of money they figured the police could earn from civil forfeitures. Those cops had an endless supply of money, the politicians reasoned, so they gave much of the tax funds to other government agencies.”

“But a lot of that money seized is probably used to fight the criminals that had it,” Nelson said.

Mac looked at the ceiling. “No, actually 80% of those who have their property seized are never charged with any crime. They’re never declared criminals, so the money isn’t wasted on them.”

“Then how do they know the person was guilty of anything and should have had their money or property seized?” Nelson asked.

“I told you, it’s not whether the person is guilty, it’s the property that’s guilty.”

"This is crazy."

"But it doesn't allow anyone to hide behind the Bill of Rights," Mac said.

"Do you believe what he's saying is true?" Nelson asked me.

I nodded.

"I'd want some proof," he said.

I opened the file draw on my desk and took out a folder. "Here are a couple of examples from some articles I once wrote," I said. "In the first a man had his luxury boat seized when the Coast Guard found the remains of a marijuana joint on the deck. When the man pointed out that it must have belonged to one of the men he hired to crew for him, the Coast Guard told him it didn't matter, that it was his boat and he is responsible for what happens onboard.

"Well, that makes sense," Nelson said.

"The man's lawyer pointed out that when drugs are found on a cruise ship, the Coast Guard won't seize the ship, but the government's lawyers didn't think that mattered.

"And when a man borrowed his ex-wife's car and picked up a hooker and took her to motel, they seized the ex-wife's vehicle because her ex-husband was breaking the law with it. Just because she didn't know was no defense. But when it was pointed out that by the same logic they should also have seized that particular national motel chain, they were also ignored.

"You can wind up doing time just for resisting a wrongful seizure, and people have been shot and killed by police who were trying to wrongfully seize their property."

"I don't believe that," Nelson said.

"That's exactly what happened to Donald Scott in Santa Monica, California. He had no reason to think it was cops who were breaking into his house and scaring the wits out of his wife so when they busted down his door to seize his property—because they'd gotten a tip that he was growing marijuana on his estate—and they came rushing in in their black suits, his wife started screaming and he

came rushing out of his bedroom, supposedly to protect himself and his wife, and they blew him away. In the end they never found drugs on his estate."

"A little mistake," Mac said. "But the government was not held liable for Scott's death. Agents of the government are seldom held accountable, so they're never discouraged from trying more modern methods of getting around that damned Bill of Rights. Just keep in mind that if we stop these property seizures, we may lose police protection."

"This isn't police protection," Nelson said. "It's the foundation for a police state."

"I think you're overreacting," Mac said, "Let's see what else there is," and he continued to read from the almanac.

## Unlisted rights

"Hmm," he said as he scanned the rest of the page. "We can skip this one and that one." But get a load of this, it's the Ninth Amendment:

**The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.**

"They must have had more than just milk in their tea when they thought this one up. Do you know what they're saying? That there are other rights, not mentioned here. It implies that because homosexuality isn't prohibited by the Constitution, it's a right. Because drugs aren't prohibited by the Constitution, people can do them. Because privacy isn't mentioned, people have a right to it. Because travel is not restricted in the Constitution, people can travel, whether in a horse and buggy or in an automobile, without needing a government license such as those issued by your local DMV. Holy cow, how are we going to make things illegal?"

"Why do you want to make everything illegal?" Nelson asked.

"One of the first things you've got to realize is that the Bill of Rights were intended as a limit on government. This was one of the mistakes our Founding Fathers made. But luckily what the government has managed to do, in our interest of course, is to turn that around and make it so that if a right isn't mentioned in any of the Amendments, then we don't have it. This has been done by being very quiet about the Ninth Amendment. Shh."

Nelson looked horrified now.

"You have no idea how dangerous this amendment is and you should be thankful that our leaders have been wise enough to ignore it when enacting laws. Whew."

Nelson got up and was pacing the floor. "You know, Mac, I've heard Dave talk about you and I thought I'd respect you, but what you want in this country is a government that can do anything it wants to do and a Constitution that doesn't mean anything."

Mac acted as if he wasn't listening as he read the book. "Hey, get this one," he blurted out. "The Tenth Amendment says:

**The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.**

"If the guys in Washington observed this amendment, the federal government, as we know it, would have to shut down. It's more proof that the Constitution is inadequate. I mean, it would be absurd to think that all the things the government should be allowed to do could be contained in one document.

"Do you have an automobile owners manual in your car?" Mac asked.

"What's my owners' manual got to do with what we're talking about?"

"I'm just asking a question."

"Of course I do."

"How long is it?"

Nelson was looking at him again as if Mac was crazy. "I don't know, 200 pages?"

"200 pages," Mac said. "200 pages just to run one stinking car. Do you realize that this copy of the Constitution with all of its Amendments is only eight pages long? If it takes 200 pages to show you how to run your car, how can you run something as complicated as the United States of America with just eight pages of instructions?"

## **Horse and buggy days**

"You want to throw the whole Constitution out," Nelson yelled.

"No I don't," Mac said calmly. "I just want us to handle it differently. I'm just trying to find a way to use this inefficient, outmoded, and at times dangerous document? Should we repeal it? No, that'll stir up too much trouble. There are some people in this country who are as deluded as our Founding Fathers and think we should keep it intact."

"I'm one of them," Nelson growled.

"Well, we can still keep it," Mac said. "But to keep people from hiding behind it and to keep the government running smoothly, I suggest we continue to do what we're doing now."

"What's that?"

"Ignore it. Just pretend it doesn't exist and, when pressed, just point out that the document is ancient, outmoded, or even dangerous. Even our greatest President, Franklin Roosevelt, called it a document that was only suitable for the horse and buggy days. For both national security and public and personal safety, there should be exceptions to any clause or Amendment that's holding us back. We have experts at the national, state, and local levels who are making progress in this direction. I think they took a tip from basketball."

"What's basketball got to do with this?"

"Well, the National Basketball Association has shown that ignoring its own rules can be beneficial."

"What do you mean?"

"You used to get called for traveling if you took too many steps. But the game was too boring. So, what did they do? If you don't know, watch today's stars when they go to the basket. Travelling? They look as though they should be carrying luggage and a train ticket.

"And palming the ball? Well, technically it's illegal, but most of these guys coming down court look like they learned to dribble from Lester Hayes."

"Who's Lester Hayes?"

"Remember Hayes of the Oakland Raiders. He had so much stick 'um on his hands I used to wonder how they got the ball away from him after he touched it. One day, they're going realize even the pretension of dribbling is a waste of time and they're going to give it up completely. And the beauty is, the NBA didn't even go through the trouble of changing even one rule to change the game, they just ignored the ones that are there; look how much better basketball is for it."

Nelson looked at me again. "I'm telling you, John, this guy's crazy."

Mac continued, "Nelson, if you don't want people hiding behind the Constitution, I suggest you write to your Congressman. Let him or her know what we need."

"Mac, you're not listening to me, are you?" Nelson said. "You're crazy."

"Let them know what we deserve," Mac said as he closed the almanac. "Let them know we want to be kept safe. Let them know we can't run a government with a document that's over two centuries old. Tell them terrorists, criminals, religious nuts, political wackos, and a host of others hide behind it. Tell them they should choose our rights as they go along, and when some group tells them our so-called rights are in the way of environmental policies, or the war on

drugs, or police procedures, they need to adjust them.

Mac stood up and put the book back on the shelf.

"You know, your friend is crazy," Nelson said to me.

"I know," I said.

Mac headed for the door.

"Where are you going?" I asked.

"Fishing," he said as he picked up his fishing rod near the bookcase and went out the door, and we could hear his footfalls as he went down the stairs.

Nelson stared at the door and didn't say anything for a long time.

Finally he said, "I'm not sure whether I like that guy or not."

"You know he was just kidding, don't you?"

He didn't say anything for awhile.

"He was pulling your leg," I said. "Not about what the government's doing, but that he thinks it's a good idea."

"You mean, he doesn't think the government should be able to get away with that kind of stuff?"

"He must have already been awake when you said you don't read the magazine. If you did, you'd already know that Mac's a strict constitutionalist."

"He is?"

"That's right."

There was a long pause. "You know, I actually figured that."

"I knew you'd see through him."

Nelson nodded.

"He probably heard the part about you and your friends being willing to play poker with him for a lot of money. You should invite him."

There was a heavy silence in the room after I said that.

"He was just kidding about all that stuff he said, huh?"

"Yes."

"I don't think I'd want to play poker with him."

"That's probably a good idea," I said, and I went back to work on my column. Δ

## Here's how to make the hay business pay off

By Emory Warner

**M**aking a living in the country is hard work. I see many good ideas presented in *BHM*—everything from telecommuting to handyman's services, and I would like to present another alternative: making hay. While no ticket to riches, (what is?) hay can give you a lump sum just prior to the fall and winter spending season.

Like any other business, nothing happens until something is sold. Before starting, survey your local area for a market. Direct sales to hay users will net the most profit, but are the most difficult sales to make. Auctions are an excellent place to sell your hay, the drawback being that you are at the mercy of supply and demand. I suggest that you talk, in person, to boarding stable operators, horse and beef farms, and one or two dairy operators to get a feel for the local market. I have found that the same hay will bring \$2.50 to \$3 a bale in one end of the county, and \$1.25 at the other end. I have had poor success with those who advertise themselves as hay buyers. They either beat you way down on the price, or just plain don't pay. If you make good hay, the word will get out. Every rural community has a gathering place where everyone tends to congregate, and good quality hay producers will find themselves a frequent topic of discussion.

Getting started is not as difficult as it appears. Three things are necessary:

- Equipment
- Sufficient grass
- Storage

Equipment is not as costly as it appears, fields can be

cut on a shares basis, and storage can be made up with discarded pallets and poly tarps. You can get started for about \$5,000, less if you are willing to buy equipment in need of repair.

The major expense in equipment will be the tractor itself. You can easily upgrade equipment later if you have an adequate tractor. You'll need at least 35 horsepower, and 50 would be better to operate a baler and wagon. A low clearance, live Power Takeoff (PTO), and good brakes are essential. Diesel power is well worth the added expense, as you will quickly realize savings in reduced operating costs compared to gasoline. Expect to pay at least \$3,000 for a useable tractor. If



40 HP Deutz tractor and John Deere side-delivery rake

you're homesteading, you probably already have a tractor. If too small, trade in the little one for a bigger one.

Mowers are next in expense. If you can find one in good shape, buy a mower-conditioner or "haybine." Haybines run the cut grass through rollers much like the wringer on an old-fashioned washing machine, which cracks the hard stems, making the hay better due to its softer texture

as well as helping the hay to dry more quickly and uniformly. Second and third cutting hay is much less "stalky" and can just as easily be mowed with a sickle bar. If you find a "hay conditioner," then a sickle bar mower alone will suffice. The conditioner is run over the first cutting hay, crimping it, and is not really needed for subsequent cuttings. Mowers run the range from "free for the hauling" to well over \$1,000. Haybines can usually be found for \$1,000 to



This is what we did with the rain-spoiled hay. It makes an excellent mulch, and it will be plowed under in the spring.

\$1,500. Hay conditioners run from “haul it away” to \$1,000. Hayrakes run about \$500 to \$1,000. Find one in decent shape and pay the money; you’ll save very little trying to repair a clunker. Side-delivery rakes have changed very little in the last 50 years, and they hold their value as a result.

Balers can be found at surprisingly low cost. Most commercial operators make hay into large round or 3'x3'x8' rectangular bales, so that the hay is handled efficiently by a front-end loader with a long spike. The older small square balers that make 18"x18"x40" bales are available anywhere for \$600 or so with a drop chute, or \$1,200 for a baler with a kicker.

Hay wagons are not optional. Chute balers can drop bales on the ground to be picked up later, but this is a waste of time. Towing a wagon behind the baler to catch bales is a far more efficient method. If you have a chute baler, you’ll need someone on the wagon to stack bales as they come off the chute. A kicker baler will launch bales overhead and into the wagon mechanically, making baling a one-man operation. Flat wagons suitable for a chute job can be had for as little as \$200. Rack wagons for a kicker will start at about \$600. You’ll have to look around a bit to get a good deal, and you’ll need more than one.

Finding grass to make hay from is not too difficult. Obviously, start with your own land. Cutting other people’s land is how most of us do it, and will fall into several categories. Absentee landowners, retirees’, and city refugees on acreages frequently will give away whatever hay you make in return for mowing fields for which they have no use. Other homesteaders will usually accept half the hay made as rent. I pay my landowners 40% of my profit, with the understanding that any improvements will come out of my pocket. I don’t like a 50/50 split of profits and expenses: profits are easy to expend, and expenses can sometimes be hard to collect, especially if

you’re dealing with an absentee landowner who sees no need for fertilizer, etc. Start out small, care for the land like it’s yours, and you’ll soon have landowners seeking you out.

Don’t overlook storage of finished hay. I made this mistake and lost 80% of my first cutting. The best place to store hay is in your own barn if you have one. If not, finding a rental may be difficult. If you are lucky, one of your absentee or retired landowners will have a suitable building to rent

and may even catch fire. Conditioned hay will cure in two days of sunshine; mowed hay will take three. Once the mowed hay is cured, rake it into windrows and bale it. Experience will quickly teach you how large a windrow to make for maximum efficiency of the baler. Good hay will have a green color and a sweet smell. Moldy hay will be dusty and smell musty. Avoid breathing the dust from moldy hay; it is a haven of mold



*Tractor, baler, and borrowed wagon. As you can see, it makes a long rig.*

for 10-cents a bale. Otherwise you’ll have to stack your hay on pallets and cover it. This will work if you do it right. Make certain that there is room for air to circulate. Stack the bales in a pyramid shape, and use a large enough tarp to cover the hay right down to the pallets. Tie it down securely and use something to keep the tarps from lying on the top row of bales. Condensation will collect on the inside of the tarp and drip into the hay and ruin it.

I made a flat-topped stack, used poly to cover it, and didn’t tie it down well enough. A gusty thunderstorm blew through and tore holes in the plastic that didn’t blow away outright. Wet bales rapidly become moldy and are unfit for animal feed.

The only “secret” to making good hay is to dry it thoroughly after cutting and keep it dry. Hay that is rained on in the windrow will bleach out and lose much of its feed value. Hay baled too quickly will heat up, get moldy,

spores and bacteria and will make you ill.

Your initial survey will aid you greatly in marketing your product. If you concentrate on making quality hay, attempt to capture some of the horse feed market. If you have a horse racing track nearby, start there. Take several sample bales, phone ahead for an appointment, and good luck. While you’re out, locate any boarding stables, rental stables, etc. and try your luck. Bulletin boards in tack shops and feed dealers may help. I’ve gotten referrals from the local sawmill and from people picking up sawdust for bedding. Don’t overlook local freebie want ads, as well as the local classifieds. Farming oriented newsletters or newspapers are excellent sources. The fastest way to sell your hay is at auction. Most farmers’ markets and rural produce auctions also auction hay on a regular basis.

Of the above, the horse folks are the best market. Once you've won a customer, they will stay with you. A local boarding stable bought 300 bales from me this year, and ordered 1,000 bales in advance for next year to be delivered straight off the wagon.

Pricing your product will vary from year to year, according to supply. Mixed grass seems to sell the best and usually runs \$1.25 to \$1.50 a bale in this area. We've had a very dry year, and the same hay is selling for up to \$2 a bale and may go higher. Delivery fees work out to about 50 cents a bale. Poor quality hay can be sold as steer feed. The junk hay can be sold as bedding, straw mulch, or composted. We used some for mulch in the vegetable garden, sold some to the mushroom growers, and composted the rest.

Don't overlook "custom" work, making other people's hay for a fee. Some homesteaders grow their own hay for home use and the quantity is insufficient to justify buying their own equipment. This is easier money in that you don't have to sell a product, because you're selling a service. The going rate for this is 50 cents a bale, and the landowner stacks his own.

My first year in the hay business was a real education. I was very fortunate to get hooked up with a custom operator who works in round bales which is a complement to my square bales. I made about all of the mistakes you can make, but I still made enough to pay for the equipment.

Borrowing equipment is not the way to go; it seems that everyone makes hay at the same time. Equipment

breakdowns are another fact of life, especially with older equipment. I suggest that you buy equipment based on parts availability, as well as condition and price. A good parts man and a well-stocked local dealer would make a lesser brand machine more attractive, so I hesitate to recommend brands. However, John Deere and New Holland both have an excellent reputation in hay-making equipment and would be as good a place to start as any. Tractors are an entire story in themselves and may be the subject of a future article.

Consider this carefully and well: hay is a lot of hard work in high summer. It is also a good way to make money. Good luck, and I may see you at the auction. Δ

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# Build quick and inexpensive slabwood outbuildings

By Rev. J. D. Hooker

In most parts of the country the outer slabs removed from logs, as they are processed into lumber at sawmills, are relegated to use as firewood. This is a shameful waste because these slabs were once commonly used for building material, especially by folks dwelling in the Adirondacks and northern parts of the Appalachians.

Whether sawing up spruce and white pine for regular construction grade lumber or hardwoods for flooring and shipping pallets, the leftover outer portions of each log represent some pretty good building materials that can usually be had at truly modest prices—and often they're free just for the hauling away.

Many of the slab-sided and slab-roofed hunting shacks and cabins built in parts of Pennsylvania and New York State started out as nothing more than temporary, but comfortable, hunting shelters 100 years ago, but they are still standing today, evidence not only of how such material was once used but how durable it is.

Over the past 10 years or so, slabwood has become much more popular for use in fashioning poultry houses, horse shelters, and other outbuildings here in our part of Indiana. I can't say for certain that the rise in the use of this sort of "lumber" actually started after so many folks saw the slabwood roof I put on one of our own outbuildings around that time, or if it's because, by coincidence, a lot of other folks started looking at this kind of wood the same way I did.

At any rate, the roof of one of my outbuildings, shown in photo, is about



*An outbuilding with a slabwood roof*

11 years old now and has yet to leak. In fact, the bark that was still clinging to several of the pieces of the slabwood I used still hasn't loosened up enough to fall off.

Like many of our other outbuildings, the walls of this one were fashioned from worn out basement and crawl-space forms, left over from my years as a contractor. If I remember correctly, that's a 100-square-foot roof and my actual cost was exactly \$2—for nails.

## Framing and siding

Most of the buildings I've seen or helped put up that used sawmill slabs as a major building material have been simple pole-building type construction using posts of one sort or another, such as treated wood, used telephone or light poles, railroad ties, or

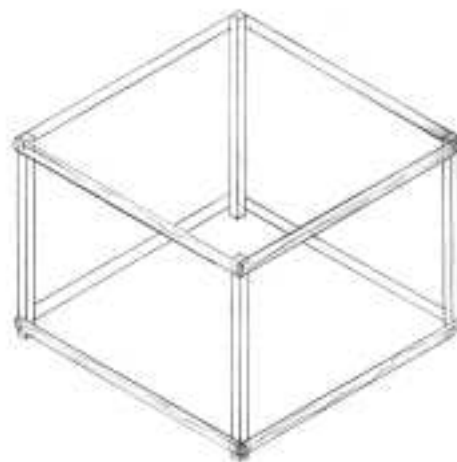
naturally rot-resistant woods like catalpa and cedar. These are set into the ground at the corners (Figure 1).

Larger buildings are built using the same types of posts, set in the same way, at about 8 or 10-foot intervals around the building's perimeter.

Next, heavier slabs (at least two-inches thick) are nailed around the bottom of these posts along the outside and approximately two inches above the ground. About six or eight feet higher—or whatever height you desire—similar heavy sawmill slabs are again nailed around the outside. Keeping these upper slabs perfectly level lets you know where to saw off the supporting posts.

The ridge beam rafters, and any other necessary roof framing members, are also fashioned of slabwood that's at least 1½-inches thick.

With the framing completed, the next step is to cut a whole stack of slabs to the required length, which is then applied in a manner pretty similar to installing board and batten siding (Figure 2), covering all the exterior



*Figure 1*



Figure 2

walls, but leaving the openings you'll require for doors and windows of course.

## Doors

Simple crossbuck type doors are readily fashioned from wooden slabs as well. To do so, you'll only need to rip-saw several slabs so that both edges are straight and square. If you don't have a table-saw, a skill saw works well enough for this. Then just nail the door together as illustrated (Figure 3). Thinner, narrow slabs can be nailed over any minor gaps, on the side opposite your bracing. Of course shutters can be easily put together using the same method.

The next step is to nail several slabs atop the rafters, installing them just like the old style spaced sheathing. It works best to attach these spaced pieces of slabwood 10-inches on center (Figure 4).

After installing the sheathing, a chain saw, circular saw, or occasionally a tractor-powered cut-off saw is used to cut a large quantity of sawmill slabs to length. For roofing over a building which might be heated, a length of 48 inches is usually required while for unheated buildings three feet works just fine. You'll need to saw up

enough of your thinnest pieces of slab-wood for use as starter shingles at the bottom edges of your roof (Figure 4).

Anyone who has ever installed a cedar shake roof already knows how to go about nailing these pieces of sawed off slabwood in place. Simply remember to install them with a 20-inch exposure to the weather.

Those of you unfamiliar with installing cedar shake roofing

need not be intimidated by the task. Start by nailing in place your thinnest pieces of slab-wood shakes at the bottom edge of your roof. Leave about a 1/4-inch gap between the sides of each piece (just guessing close to 1/4-inch is plenty good enough) while allowing the bottom edges to overhang the roof edge by about two inches.

Next, apply a second layer of this wooden roofing in exactly the same manner right on top of your first layer. Make certain that none of the gaps in this layer end up over top of the gaps in your original row.

After that your next step is simply to measure up 20 inches from the bottom edge of this first row of slabwood shakes and snap a chalk line. Nail in place your next row of roofing, using this chalk line as a guide for the bottom edges. Repeating this step

until you've reached the peak of your roof while making certain that none of the 1/4-inch gaps between your pieces of slabwood line up with the ones directly below them (Figure 5). Don't use more or less than two nails per slabwood shake regardless of its width.

Should you be installing these on a peaked roof, you'll need to saw off that portion of the roofing which ends up extending over the peak. As shown in the illustrations, when installing a peaked roof you'll also need to nail together and install pieces of slab-wood for use as a ridge cap.



Figure 3

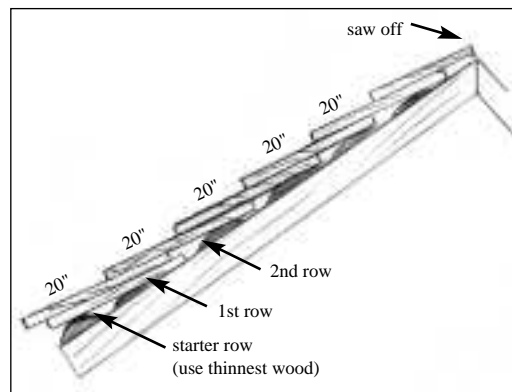


Figure 4

## Flooring

Because of the tough clay soil of our area, most folks around here (including me) prefer to use either rammed earth or soil cement as a floor for any livestock

or storage buildings made from slab-wood. Add a few inches of dry sawdust, which is generally available from the same sawmill that your slab-wood came from, then spread some



Figure 5

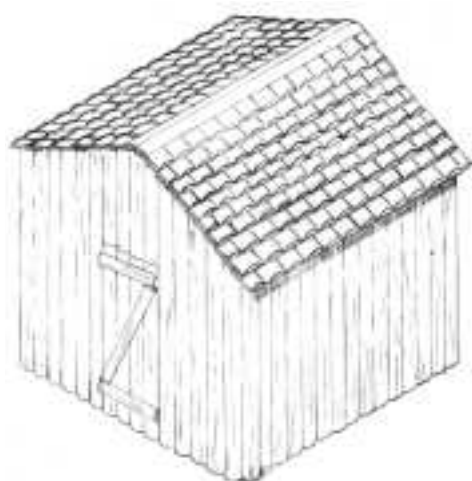


Figure 6

clean straw for bedding atop the sawdust, and your animals will love their new quarters.

Once you've completed the job, you'll have a sturdy, weatherproof, long lasting, and picturesque rustic-type building which is well suited to a wide array of rural uses (Figure 6). The only out-of-pocket expenses you should encounter are for nails, possibly some token payment for the sawmill slabs, and the fuel required to transport this free—or at least very low cost—lumber.

Over the years I've also seen quite a few folks use some real backwoods ingenuity to find other uses for this kind of lumber for wooden fencing, garden benches, workshop shelving, goat and cattle stanchions, mangers, feed troughs, and puncheon flooring. Nearly everything one could possibly craft from standard lumber can be, and often has been, fashioned from sawmill slabs. So why not at least look into putting this nice, ruggedly rustic, high quality, low (or no) cost lumber, along with some of your own ingenuity, to use around your own backwoods home. Δ

## Herb scented candles

*By Darlene Polachic*

Candlemaking has been a popular craft for years, but this method adds a little twist: dried or fresh-chopped herbs for long-lasting fragrance.

### Materials needed:

(for two 8-inch x 3-inch candles):

- 2 pounds paraffin or beeswax broken in chunks. (Though beeswax burns better, both paraffin and beeswax take color and fragrance well and may be used singly or mixed in any proportions desired.)
- 2 cups powdered dried herbs or 3 cups fresh herbs, chopped finely. (Petals of richly perfumed flowers can also be used. Experiment with rosemary, lemon verbena, rose, camomile, lavender and santolina. Or try adding lemon and orange gratings.)
- 2 crayons or 2 sticks of candle colorant, shaved.
- 2 11-inch candle wicks or thick cotton twine.
- 2 8-inch x 3-inch candle molds. (May be quart milk cartons, or various sized tin cans used single or double-decker by removing the bottom from the uppermost can and sealing the seam with heat resistant tape.)

### Procedure:

1. Cover work area with newspaper.
2. Melt wax over double boiler. CAUTION: Never work over direct heat and never leave

unattended. Wax is highly flammable.

3. When wax is melted, remove from heat and stir in coloring and herb material. Allow wax to cool slightly while you prepare the molds.
4. Lightly coat the inside of the mold with petroleum jelly to make removal easier.
5. Wrap one end of wicking around a pencil or stick and balance it across the top of the mold, centering the wick and making sure it extends all the way to the bottom of the mold.
6. When the wax is cooled to the consistency of almost-set jello, pour carefully into molds. After about 45 minutes, poke a small hole with a pencil in the crust near the wick and fill hole with hot wax. If you don't, a deep well will form around the wick as the wax hardens and shrinks.



7. Allow wax to set thoroughly.
8. Carefully remove candle from mold. Trim edges with a knife and polish the sides with an old piece of pantyhose.
9. Embellish the scented candle if desired. Dried flowers or herbs may be 'glued' on with melted wax. For Christmas giving, surround the candle with a small evergreen wreath or a ring of shiny holly leaves and add a festive bow. Δ

## Ayooob on firearms

*By Massad Ayooob*

### National junior handgun championships

**Y**eah, I know, this issue was supposed to have Part II of the story on the Thompson/Center Contender. The project has been on hold because I've been buried with other responsibilities, one of which is a fabulous story I'd like to share with you now.

Most *Backwoods Home* readers appreciate that one advantage of the rural lifestyle is that you can take your kids out in the back yard to teach them to shoot. Seen by the urban public as an icon of power, the gun is better known to its actual users as a touchstone of responsibility and independence. I've found it a tool of parenting to show my kids that with responsibility comes power, and with power comes responsibility. So have many of you reading this.

The National Junior Handgun Championships of 1998 came into being a year earlier. Richard Davis, inventor of concealable body armor and sponsor of the famous Second Chance Shoot, agreed to host it concurrent with Second Chance '98. John Maxwell, a long-time Second Chance competitor and an ex-cop, was the prime mover. Tom Sheppardson, a professional middle school educator, volunteered also. I rounded out the committee.

The event became a reality the week of June 12-19 in the pastoral village of Central Lake, Michigan, on the southern peninsula. Almost two dozen kids showed up. The format was Second Chance's trademark: shooting heavy bowling pins off steel tables, an enhanced version of shooting tin cans off the back fence. On Tom's advice, we set up two categories: Sub-Junior, with an age range of 13 and down, and

Junior for kids 14-17. This, Tom advised us, was the average age break where growing bones wouldn't be damaged by training regimen of firing with hard-kicking handguns.

The Juniors shot by the same rules as adults: six tables of five pins each, which had to all be blown three feet back off the table before the timers would stop the watches. The aggregate of the best five of the six tables would count. This requires a powerful handgun; most competitors use .45 or 10mm automatics, or Magnum revolvers.

Sub-Juniors got a different "pin-set." Each of their tables had five pins set only a foot from the back. This allowed a lighter recoiling gun, like a 9mm, a .45 with reduced loads, or .38 Special cartridges in revolvers. An adult parent or coach had to be on the line with Sub-Juniors while they shot.

We did not separate the genders. Our collective experience had convinced us that in two-handed fast shooting, the boys' advantage of greater upper body strength and muscular endurance would be equalized by the girls' finer motor skills and better concentration. This was validated by the results. Entries were 4:1 boys over girls, but girls captured two of the six available first place titles.

### And the winners were...

Top Junior in the main event was Cody Maxwell, 13. His score was the envy of many adult contestants. Firing a Colt .45 auto with recoil compensator that was built by his dad, Cody was on a roll. A few days later he was destined to collect many medals at the National Junior Air Pistol championship in Atlanta.



*Massad Ayooob*

Winning Sub-Junior class was Adam Clark, 13. He fired a pistol similar to Cody's, but with light handloads. He exhibited the same coolness and poise as Cody winning the championship. Both of these kids are absolute role models.

Cody Maxwell won the junior light rifle event with Adam Clark winning the Sub-Junior title, and Kristin Britt captured individual Junior shotgun with Adam Clark winning in the Sub-Junior category. In the latter, it should be noted, full size 12-gauge shotguns with buckshot were necessary. It's a tough job for an adult to shoot a gun that powerful with winning speed, and a tougher job still for a kid.

In the parent/child team events, John and Cody Maxwell won the Junior with a time I've seen win guns when posted in the adult two-man team event. They did it with a pair of .45s. My daughter Justine, 13, and I won the national title. At that point she had switched from the HK 9mm she used

for the main event to a Springfield Armory .45 auto with full power loads, and I was shooting a Colt 10mm with Triton ammunition. She used the same Springfield .45 to win the last-day shootoff.

Cody Maxwell won the national Junior championship shooting alone, his father waiting anxiously in the parking lot because he knew his presence on the line would add to the pressure. Adam Clark won the national sub-Junior championship with his dad Randy standing proudly at his shoulder. Different kids react differently to parental presence when they are "in the arena."

Some parents told me their kids bowed out of shooting the match at the last minute for fear of disappointing their dads with a sub-par performance. The pressure of competing in a national event is fierce. Not all the kids who shot the National Championship did as well as they expected. But every one of them left knowing that their having the courage to compete under that kind of pressure had made their parents enormously proud.

Not everyone could be National Champion. I'll tell you this, though. Every one of those kids was a winner.

Let me close by thanking Ruger, Taurus, Wilson Custom, Cylinder & Slide, and Morris Custom for the prize guns they donated. I want to particularly thank the many individual adult shooters who donated prizes for the kids. Special kudos go to John Maxwell, the man who really made it happen.

The Second Annual National Junior Handgun championships will be held under the same rules June 11-17, 1999, in Waterloo, Iowa. The contestant doesn't have to be there the whole time, nor be present at the awards ceremony, to win, and the main event can be shot in a single day. For information write Clare Dixon, 5907 Daisy Drive, Waterloo, IA 50701, or phone him at (319) 345-6307. Δ

***The Ninth Year***

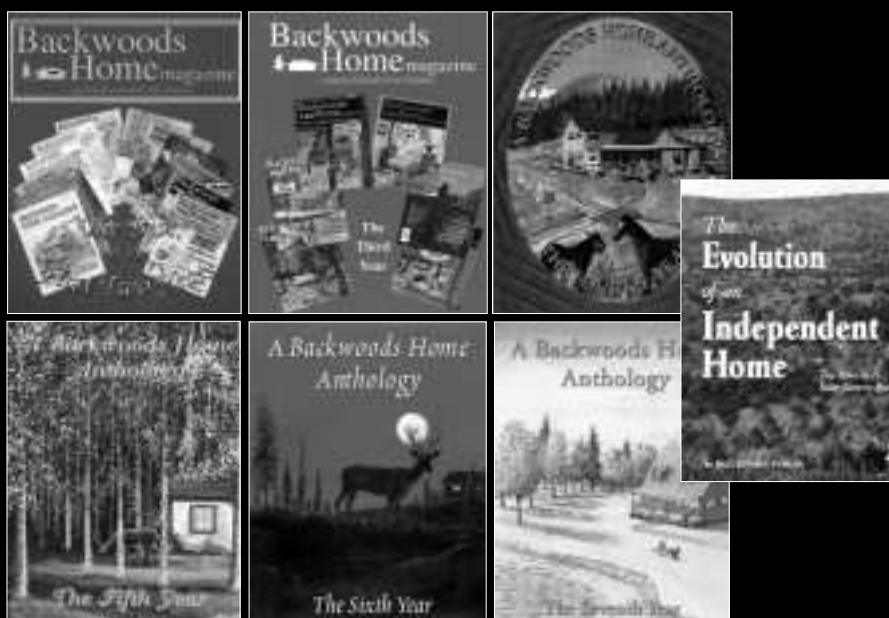
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## Quiet your noisy generator with an automobile muffler

By Jon B. Bushey

Having a cabin in a remote area of Utah, I depend upon a generator to provide electricity. I have a solar electric system, but for the high power tools I run the generator. I don't mind filling it with gas, restarting it, or even the maintenance. But the noise drives me crazy.

I have read articles in *BHM* about generator sheds to reduce noise, but I didn't want to go to that much work. Plus my generator needs to be portable as we work about the "ranch."

For a few years, I had tried to find a replacement muffler that would reduce the noise. It seemed to me the stock muffler was intended to reduce sparks—not lessen the noise. I found out later how true that was. I searched the hardware catalogs for mufflers and even ordered a few that looked promising. After trying them, I found that they too did little to quiet the engine. I visited various small engine shops and asked about "quiet mufflers." I was told again and again that the mufflers were all the same—"Just live with it."

Now, it's important to realize that this had become a quest. The more I heard that there's nothing that can be done, the more I thought that there has to be something. I searched more catalogs, called engine dealers, and rummaged part stores. Every time we had to start the generator the noise would grind on me. Not only the pulsing sound waves crushing my eardrums, but the emotional grinding of being helpless.

Determined to try anything, I sought a new fresh approach. I thought, "Okay, if the small engine dealers can't (or won't) come up with a solution, I'll try someplace else." I reasoned that the small mufflers just don't have the capacity (volume, size) to do anything about the noise. What about taking an automotive muffler and somehow hooking it up? As an engineer, I knew there could be dozens of techni-

cal challenges, not only in "hooking" the parts together, but getting them to work together effectively. And what about the metal work—I didn't have a machine shop or welder. I had nothing



*In this picture, you can see where I threaded an extra nipple into the engine. I used Teflon plumbing tape to seal the threads. The 90-degree elbow is where I will attach the nipple/connector/exhaust-pipe assembly. The muffler then slips over the assembly.*

more than hand tools. Was I getting in over my head?

At this point, if someone had told me, like I'm telling you, how simple this is, I never would have believed them. After years of research, design, trials, and errors, the job ended up taking about half an hour. And most of the half hour was running around—maybe 10 minutes of actual work.

There are two secrets that make this a dream-come-true. First, a lot of small engines, like my eight-horse Tecumseh, use NPT to thread the muffler on. Briggs & Stratton uses NPT also, but in 1/2, 3/4, or 1-inch diameter. Mine has 3/4-inch threads. Check your engine, as you will need to know the size. The second secret is that the NPT connectors used to join pipes have a little smaller outside diameter than the inside diameter of an automotive



*The finished unit*

exhaust pipe. This means that an off-the-shelf piece of pipe, threaded at one end for your engine, will slip inside a car muffler.

Now, to get the pipe and connector to mate your small engine to a car muffler, go to the hardware store and walk down the plumbing aisle. Yes, we are getting engine parts; it's just that normal people use them for plumbing. Find a "nipple" that has the diameter of your engine's muffler. As a rule of thumb, it's a 1/2-inch for 5-horse, 3/4 for 8-horse, and a 1-inch for 10-horse. You will need to get a length that will suit your engine's mounting. I got a 2 1/2-inch. I also got a 90-degree elbow because I wanted the muffler to parallel the generator. It was easier for me to support the muffler that way. You may need additional fittings to get the muffler in a position for mounting.

The final thing we need is a connector/adaptor. Use either one. The result



*The before and after  
connector/adapters*

we are looking for is to have one end of the pipe to be a little less than 1 3/4 inches outside diameter.

The smaller of the two shown in the photo above is the result of putting together the nipple and the connector. The other is the result of taking the two parts to a muffler shop. At the

muffler shop, I had them weld a small piece of exhaust pipe onto the outside of the connector. The connector is not visible in the larger set because it is hidden inside the exhaust pipe. While at the muffler shop get a muffler and a muffler clamp. I paid \$30 for the welding, muffler, and clamp. I also got a tail pipe and another clamp because it made it easier for me to mount the muffler.

Make sure to securely mount the muffler. Between the weight and the vibration, the threads cannot support the muffler. And, of course, the muffler will get very hot.

I did some measurements of the sound levels before and after. I just used a simple cassette recorder with a sound meter, so the results are not accurate. However, it wasn't really needed anyway—the difference in sound level is very apparent to the ear.

It turns out there is not much difference between no muffler and having one of the many small engine mufflers attached. The small engine mufflers just don't make any noticeable difference in the sound level. After hooking up the car muffler (and all the plumbing), I went to pull the rope starter and I could hardly believe the difference. It was hard to tell the engine was turning over. After a second or two, the engine powered up to speed and the noise did increase. Keep in mind that a generator runs at 1/2 to 3/4 throttle so there's going to be some noise. While the sound is still noticeable, it's much more peaceful than before. If you're curious about what your generator would sound like, you can use your vehicle as a test. Start your engine and let it idle out of gear. Next, press the accelerator until you reach about 2700 RPM. The sound your engine makes will be about the same as the generator with these modifications. If you don't have a tachometer, accelerate to about four times the hot idle, the same as going down the highway doing 55 mph. Δ

### *A country moment*



*Tony Pennucci holds his 16 3/4 pound catfish caught at Copco Lake in northern California as Jason Lemke, age 10, looks on.*

# Make these inexpensive wood surface clamps

By Dana Martin Batory

No matter what size lumber you have on hand in the workshop it always seems your project requires wider stock. That calls for gluing up several narrow boards and trying to control the buckling encountered with bar and/or pipe clamps. Often I must glue up rough-planed planks into panels 18 to 20-inches wide before feeding them through my antique 24-inch Defiance planer.

I've managed to devise a clamping fixture that, while not completely eliminating the problem, does bring it within acceptable limits. By straddling the boards with one broad face on each side, the clamp exerts equal pressure on both sides of the flat work. Besides this, each clamp cost me less than 50 cents.

## General construction

In my case the clamps were constructed from red oak 2x4s salvaged



*The salvaged red oak 2x4s and T-nuts*

from the pallets and skids on which BAJA Boats of Bucyrus, Ohio, used to receive their inboard motors. A good illustration that any hardwood scrap will work. The T-nuts were also removed from the pallets. The

only real expense was the bolts and washers.

The beauty of the design lies in the fact that the 2x4s can even be warped. In fact, a slight warp seems to help by exerting even more pres-

sure when the bolts are tightened. The clamps can be as crude or as fancy as you want and still work.

### Cutting list/materials:

- (2) Clamp Faces 36" long x 4" wide x 2" tall
- (6) 3/8 x 16 T-Nuts
- (2) 3/8" I.D. Washers
- (2) 3/8 x 16 6" hex head bolts

### Instructions:

Square up the lumber and cut to size. Lay out location of holes. First countersink for the T-nut flange in the bottom clamp's underside with a 1-inch spade bit. The hole should be about a 1/4-inch deep.

Use these as guides to drill the inch holes for the bolts. To ensure alignment, both faces should be drilled at the same time by clamping them together. A drill press will ensure better accuracy. If the



*Drilling the hole for the bolt shank*

drill bit isn't long enough to do both at once, then unclamp and finish drilling.

Tap the T-nuts into place and draw them down using the bolts and top clamp. Disassemble clamps. Sand and varnish the clamps at least three times, sanding between coats, and then wax. This helps keep glue from sticking to them.



*Gluing up sycamore boards with the clamps*

## Use

Apply glue to board edges. Place one clamp face above the work surface and one below. Run the bolts through the holes closest to the board's edges. Draw the bolts down to where the clamp faces are just snug so the boards can move horizontally when the bar or pipe clamps are tightened. Δ

# Have some all natural desserts on a stick and be real cool on a hot summer day

By Robert L. Williams

When summer arrives, the ice cream truck can't be far behind. And kids (and adults) all over the land will be consuming vast amounts of ice cream in an endless array of designs. There will be the old-fashioned hand-cranked ice cream, the commercial brands, reduced fat, no fat, sherbet, popsicles, Eskimo pies, Polar Bears, and more other brands than you can count.

And what do nearly all of them have in common? Sugar, for one thing. Just what the family dentist needs! So he can make payments on his place at the shore.

Cholesterol, for another thing. And recent studies show us that even nine and ten-year olds are starting to ingest too much fat, which in turn may be converted into cholesterol.

You want more bad news? Read the medical pages of almost any magazine or newspaper in the country and you will find that today's kids are overweight, developing early signs of heart problems, and in general in less than ideal health.

If you want more bad news, you won't get it here. This article is filled with good news.

The best news is that you can make, in your own kitchen and using the finest of natural ingredients, desserts on a stick that I call fruitsicles or veg-esicles.

What's the good news? For starters, it's that these hot-weather treats are either totally free or nearly free from all fats, cholesterol, and other enemies of good health.

These fruitsicles are also free of sugar, unless you feel the need to add a little. You can also add honey if you prefer.

More good news? These treats don't cost a buck-and-a-half for three bites. They are, in fact, almost free.

Better news? Not only are these goodies nearly free, and not only are they not bad for you, but they are actually very good for you and your kids. You get some of the best nourishment possible and at the same time get great taste.

The bottom line is that your kids will eat their fruit and even their vegetables and come back for more.

It's the truth. Your kids will eat—and love—some of the foods you couldn't otherwise get down their throats with a crowbar and ramrod.

By making these treats (for goodness sake, don't tell the kids these things are good for them!) you can fill your kids' tummies with wonderfully nourishing foods that add vitamins, bulk, and all the other necessities of a good diet.

Start with flavors. You can make these fruitsicles with apples, plums, strawberries, bananas, raspberries,



*Neighborhood kids love the fresh-fruit taste and the popsicle format.*

grapes, peaches, blackberries, dewberries, blueberries, cherries, watermelon, cantaloupes (incidentally, this is one of the most nourishing foods you can eat), honeydew melons, and tomatoes, among others.

This has to be a joke, right? There is no way you can make a frozen dessert from tomatoes, and even if you could there is no way your kids would eat it.

Try it and see. Odds are that your kids or adult family members will not even know they are eating tomatoes.



*The ingredients of the fruitsicles: watermelon, cantaloupe, apples, peaches, plums, and other natural goodies.*

Or squash, zucchini, or other vegetables.

Start with the fruits. Take a small amount of cherries, for example, and remove the pits. When you have five or six cups of the cherries, dump them into a blender and puree them. Leave the juice as well as the pureed fruits.

If the cherries are naturally sweet, you can add a hint of vanilla or any other flavors that blend well with cherries. You can also mix finely chopped nuts as well. You can mix in other fruits if you like. If you feel that you must do so, particularly if the cherries are tart, you can add a small amount of artificial sweetener or honey. Use granulated sugar as a last resort.

If you wish to modify the taste slightly, add a tiny amount of non-fat milk. You can also add small amounts of carbonated beverages in diet form (or the regular blend, if you are not counting calories).

How much do you add? Let your own taste buds answer this question. When you have it so that it tastes perfect, you can pour the mixture into paper cups, plastic cups, or any other containers that will not break when the liquid is frozen.

You can buy molds especially made for this sort of thing. They are not expensive, and they come with tops and built-in handles.

If you want to keep it cheap, use the plastic or paper. You can buy ice-cream sticks at many groceries or discount stores, and when you are ready to use them, cut a section of thin cardboard and then make a series of tiny slits in it. The cardboard section should be the same size as the mold, or large enough to cover the plastic or paper cups.

Place the cardboard over the cups and then insert a stick into the slits. Let the stick extend into the liquid desserts. Now the cardboard will hold the sticks in an erect position while the liquid freezes.

When the desserts are frozen solid, remove them from the containers. You

may have to run lukewarm water over the cups in order to free the frozen desserts from the cups. When the cups—with sticks in place—are out, wrap them in Saran paper or similar material and then place them in a bag, and return the bag to the freezer compartment. The desserts will keep as long as you need them to stay in the freezer. Take them out and serve them as needed.

You can use the same cups and sticks over and over, if you wash them after each use.

Use the same process for all fruits and melons. Scoop out or slice pieces of watermelon. Remove the seeds, then hand-squeeze the watermelon into a juicy pulp. Mix as before, adding sugar or honey only if the melon is not sweet. You can use vanilla extract if you wish. Use the same procedure as before. Do the same with other melons, such as cantaloupes or honeydew melons.

If you use grapes, start with seedless varieties if you can obtain them. If you use seeded grapes, put them into a blender and later remove the seeds.

For tomato popsicles, cut up chunks of tomatoes and put these into the blender. Puree, then add vanilla extract and honey or sugar to suit your taste, and make the desserts as before. The sugar or honey will neutralize the acids in the tomatoes, and the result is a frozen treat that has all the nutritional value of the regular tomatoes, but it's no problem getting the kids to eat the frozen veggies on a stick.

Try zucchini or yellow squash. Simply cut into tiny chunks, remove seeds, and puree. Add the flavoring and sugar or honey, if necessary, and freeze and eat.

What I do is choose raw materials out of whatever I have the most of at hand. Occasionally a grocer I know will call and tell me that he has bananas that are at the peak of ripeness. He knows that the bananas will not last more than a day, and he will sell them to me for ten cents a

pound. He does the same with other fruits and melons.

We also grow many of our fruits and berries, and we use the blackberries and wild strawberries and blueberries, all of which make wonderful desserts on a stick. Yellow tomatoes are also very good. Kids all over the country love colorful foods, and to many of them if it looks good, it is good.

Thus far no one has been able to tell the tomato desserts from the fruit and berry treats.

Now, here's the final idea. Some time ago I was at a local supply store and as a sort of joke I took along some of the fruit and tomato popsicles. I offered them, without telling them what it was, to the owner and his workers.

They loved them, and the owner asked if I would make some and let him sell them. He said that he could give me fifty cents for each of the desserts and he would sell them for a nice profit. Soon his customers were clamoring for more of the fruitsicles and the watermelon popsicles.

The only limitations you have are those imposed by your lack of imagination or lack of ingredients. Try some yourself, and then try them on the kids. Who knows? You may open a whole new world. At least, you may improve the health and eating habits of your family. Δ

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## Build a simple through-the-wall woodbox that keeps the cold out and the heat in

By Rev. J.D. Hooker

Anyone who supplies even a portion of his winter heating needs using a fireplace or woodstove should take a serious look at adding a simple BTU-preserving, through-the-wall woodbox to their set-up. In probably 99% of all cases this will prove to be a valuable energy conservation measure.

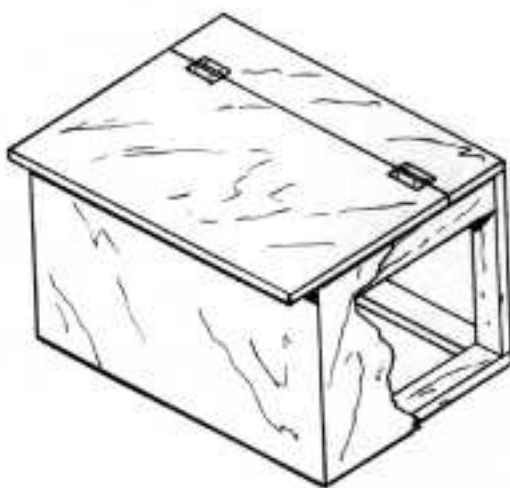
Basically, you wouldn't be doing anything more complicated than cutting a hole through one of the exterior walls of your house, then bracing up the framework and adding a large wooden box with two sets of tight-sealing doors.

As you can see from the illustrations, the outer doors are opened and the box is filled with wood from outside. Later, with the exterior doors tightly closed back up, the inside door (or doors) can be opened as needed to feed more fuel to the flames.

All of this is just as simple as it sounds. However, because individual



*The interior doors of our through-the-wall woodbox are located right next to our big fieldstone fireplace, allowing us to fuel the fireplace with ease. The design illustrated below is different from this one.*



*The hinged lid on this type of interior woodbox can double as a seat.*

most instances, though, a box that holds a two-day supply of firewood seems to work out quite well. So, should you opt to use a two-day supply of firewood as your guideline, all you need do is determine how much firewood you'll use on two very cold days, then size your own woodbox accordingly.

Of course, not every reader lives in a standard stud-framed building. Still, it's not difficult to adapt such a through-the-wall woodbox to other types of construction. For instance, though we've been heating our home for years with a really dandy and reliable Jotul woodstove, a few years back my wife mentioned how she's always loved the look of the big old fieldstone fireplaces common in West Virginia's mountain areas and how she'd always dreamed of having one.

Oddly enough, though I'd always felt much the same way, we'd been married for more than 20 years without either of us ever mentioning this.

At any rate, we sat down and went over everything we knew about such fireplaces, as well as what sort of options each of us would like to include in such a heating system. Though we leaned towards simplicity, I included an oversized firebox as well as a separate stove-top height grill for midwinter "cook-outs" into the construction. The point, though, is that I built a through-the-wall woodbox, capable of holding nearly half-a-truck-load of hardwood fuel at a time, right into the masonry work.

All of this illustrates that by adapting your own ideas and requirements to fit this very old heat conservation idea, it's possible for you to enjoy the benefits of this unique heat-saving innovation yourself. Δ

situations vary with differences in stove and fireplace efficiencies, as well as vastly varying sizes of the areas requiring heating, I couldn't possibly hope to make any sort of generalization regarding the woodbox's dimensions that are going to satisfy every need. In

# Making money is a piece of cake

*By Robert L. Williams*

What do you do when you are old enough to retire but have too much energy to just sit and watch the trees grow? Or how do you supplement an income when you have just given up a high-paying job in the big city and moved to the backwoods country to watch your life take form?

Harry Truman once commented that if you can't take the heat, get out of the kitchen. What the former President did not say is that if you can take the heat, the kitchen may be the perfect place for you, particularly if you want to earn money by creating works of art.

Some people have found, in fact, that solving the money problem is a piece of cake. Wedding cake, that is. Or birthday cakes. Or cakes for all special occasions, or simply cakes because somebody wants to buy a cake.

The major questions that rise, along with the rising cake batter, are whether you can really make money by doing home baking and where you can go to school to learn how to bake beautiful and profitable cakes.

The answers to these questions are yes, you can make money—quite a bit of it—and to the second question, you need no special kind of training whatever in order to bake great cakes.

Back to the money part of the question for a moment: how much money you can make depends upon several variables. First, how hard do you plan to work? Second, what kinds of cakes will you bake? Third, when will the cakes be needed?

If you bake a super-special wedding cake, a four-tiered creation with all the special effects, you can easily get \$150 or more for each cake. A regular four-tiered cake brings \$115 to \$130,

while a three-tiered cake sells for \$105 to \$115.

If the customer wants a more basic cake, he will expect to pay \$15 to \$20 for a full-size three-layer coconut cake. A huge devil's food cake sells for \$15, and an un-iced pound cake brings \$12 to \$15, while an iced cake sells for \$13 to \$16.

But that's not a large amount of money, considering the time that goes into the process of baking cakes. At least, that may be how it appears on the surface.

But look at reality. Buner Canipe is a retired woman who lives in the South Mountains area of North Carolina. She bakes, on a regular basis, 15 to 20 cakes per week.

Assume that she bakes two huge wedding cakes, three smaller wedding cakes, half a dozen coconut cakes, and eight iced pound cakes. The effort could bring in, if she charges rock-bottom prices, \$735 per week. If she charges in the higher ranges, one week's work could net well over \$1,000 per week.

That is, if she bakes only 19 cakes per week. If she wanted to work harder, or if she managed to schedule the baking on a daily basis over six days a week, she could bake, she says, up to 35 cakes per week.

Think of that. If she—or you—could bake one giant cake for \$150, a four-tiered wedding cake for \$120, a three-tiered wedding cake for \$110, one coconut cake for \$15, one devil's food cake for \$13, a pound cake—un-iced—for \$12, and one iced pound cake for \$13 (and these, as stated earlier, are on the low range as far as prices go), she—or you—could take in an average of about \$62 per cake.

Now, pay careful attention to this. If she—or you—baked 35 cakes per week at the average price of \$62 per

cake, the week's income could be \$2170.

Did that register? \$2170 per week, for working in your own house and at your own pace, as your own boss.

That comes out to \$112,840 per year. Naturally, this isn't all profit. You must buy flour, butter, sugar, baking powder, and all the other ingredients, and you must pay for the gas or electricity used in baking the cakes. But if you buy flour in 50-pound bags and sugar in 10-pound bags, you save money over the regular five-pound bags.

Buner Canipe says that she buys 7 dozen eggs each week, 20 pounds of confectioner's sugar, 8 pounds of butter, and 50 pounds of flour. Even if she spends \$100 weekly on ingredients and if her electricity costs another \$50 weekly—and both figures are too high—she could still earn several hundred dollars clear each week.

But how can you learn to bake great cakes? Buner Canipe never had a lesson of any sort.

"I had been married for several months before I decided to bake my first cake from scratch," she said. "I agonized over every step. The recipe said to beat the batter 300 times, and I didn't have beaters. So I used a spoon and counted three hundred times. I beat the cake and it turned out fine." What about the failure rate?

"I never have one fail," she said modestly, "unless the power goes off or something like that. People ask me what my secret is, and I tell them I find a good recipe and then I follow it exactly. I always go with what works best for me and what my customers seem to like best."

Buner Canipe says that she doesn't want to work all the time, so she bakes only about 800 cakes per year. You can figure out what she could earn, on the basis of the average cost per cake given above.

But if she wanted more orders, she could get them. She turns down orders at an alarming rate simply because she wants time for church and her hus-

band and children. But when she wants to work, she knows how to get it done.

"I have baked eight cakes before lunch a number of times," she says. "In a full day of work, if that's all I do, I could bake twice that many. Maybe more."

Suppose she—or, again, you—baked 16 to 20 cakes in one day. Not wedding cakes but basic pound cakes or coconut cakes, that is. That would amount to about \$250 per day. Even after the cost of ingredients and power are deduced, that's still around \$200 per day.

Naturally, if you throw in some of the more expensive cakes, the income level rises dramatically. But after you have bought the recipe book and learned how to bake the basic pound cake, carrot cake, devil's food, and all the other popular types, how do you learn to decorate them?

The simple answer is that most icings require very little expertise. Prepare them according to directions and then spread the finished product over the cake. But wedding cakes require a little more creativity, as do birthday, anniversary, and other celebration cakes.

You can enroll in a community college adult education program and learn to decorate cakes, or you can borrow or buy a good book and follow the simple step-by-step procedures. It is a challenging field, but it isn't rocket science. You can learn to do it. Look at the people you know who are already doing it and ask if they are that much smarter or more gifted than you are.

One of the real tricks of the trade is not just how to bake and decorate cakes but how to schedule the cakes for the most efficient work program. Many customers want cakes for week-



*If you bake a super-special wedding cake, a four-tiered creation with all the special effects, you can easily get \$150. Buner Canipe bakes, on a regular basis, 15 to 20 cakes a week.*

end occasions, which means that you cannot bake the cake on Monday and let it grow stale for a full week. You need to complete the cake on Thursday and let the customer pick it up on Friday.

So you need to fill in Monday through Thursday with orders that can be filled and picked up early in the week. So how do you fill in the empty days?

First, birthdays occur every day of the week, so build up a clientele for individual or small celebrations. Keep a file of people who buy birthday cakes and call them the next year before they have ordered their cakes.

Keep a file of anniversary and other special occasion orders and make your yearly contact. Advertise in local papers. Take full advantage of word-of-mouth advertising. Remember that many people don't need a reason to want a cake. They just like the taste and they don't want to take the time and trouble to bake one. The housewife or house-husband who spends the day in the office, on the road, or in the mill doesn't feel like coming home to bake a cake. He or she would rather buy one.

It's often false economy to do your own baking. If it takes you an hour and costs you \$3 to bake a nice cake

that you can buy for \$12 or so, you may be better off financially to buy the cake and use your hour to earn money or relax.

So you as a baker can take advantage of such thinking. Let people know you bake cakes. Take them to work with you and let your co-workers sample your work.

One great market is church socials or fund-raisers. Many churches, schools, and other social organizations have bake sales to raise money. Cakes are auctioned off. Sell your cakes to the group and let them double

the price at the auction. And always remember the immortal words of Truman's wife: If you can stand the heat, stay in the kitchen. Δ

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## Free pallet wood and birdhouses add up to big country dollars

By Rick Brentlinger

If I could show you how to manufacture a product anywhere in the country and if I offered to find you the raw materials free, would you be interested? If so, here is a business plan that works.

Have you seen those weathered wooden pallets stacked behind grocery stores, piled beside feed stores or next to the dumpster in your local lumber yard? Those pallets, your initiative, and the information that follows could mean money in your pocket for years to come.

Pallets are often available free for the asking. Businesses are glad to get rid of them so they don't have to pay to haul them away. There are two kinds of pallets—reusable and throw away. The reusable pallets are often made of oak, poplar, and occasionally maple. If there is a big stack of them, some stores will give these away free too. But the ones I like best are the throw away pallets made of pine, oak, or poplar wood.

What you do is locate a stack of pallets and ask if you can help the business owner by hauling them off for free. Always get permission before you take pallets. When you have a pickup load, stack them neatly near your workshop and you're ready to begin.

I use a circular saw to dismantle the pallets, cutting the wood off the stringers and stacking it in a dry place.

The 2 x 4 stringers can be cut in half and burned in your woodstove. The wood you've cut off the stringers is where the real money is.

Pallet wood is naturally weathered and looks like old barn siding. I use it



*Birdhouses and bird feeders made from wood scavenged for free*

to make simple, rustic birdhouses and bird feeders which I then sell at flea markets or wholesale to garden centers around town. I get \$10 to \$20 a piece for these birdhouses. The retailer usually resells them at double my price.

At this point, you're probably thinking, "Yeah, but I'm not a woodworker" or "I don't have any power equipment." The truth is that anyone can learn to make a nice birdhouse in just a few days of experimenting. After all, a birdhouse is a simple structure with seven basic parts—two sides, a front and back, a bottom, and two pieces for the top. And you don't necessarily need power equipment to cut the wood. It can be done with a handsaw

if that's all you have. Once you've made some money selling your hand-made rustic birdhouses, you can think about buying some power equipment to make the work go faster.

I use a circular saw to do the initial cutting and a Delta 12-inch bandsaw for the rest of the work. I can cut up enough pallets in one morning to make 40 or 50 birdhouses or feeders. Once the pallets are cut up and I have the wood stacked in my shop, I can make 4 or 5 birdhouses a day (less

than 8 hours). That is a minimum of \$40 a day for pleasant work in the privacy of my own shop, with no boss breathing down my neck.

Once you have a bunch of birdhouses ready to sell, load them on the truck and head for the local gardening center. Carry several of your creations with you and offer them with a smile as you ask, "How many do you need?" Some buyers

will want you to put them in the shop on consignment, something I always refuse to do. I prefer payment up front since I know I have a good product that people want.

Birdhouses and bird feeders sell well at hardware stores, garden centers, larger grocery stores, craft stores, feed stores, and, sometimes, antique stores. The rustic pallet wood bird homes nicely complement antiques.

Some people do not want rustic birdhouses. For them, I make birdhouses or feeders from number one pine and fir, maple, oak, and even mahogany which I also get free. In most areas, there are cabinet shops and wood working shops which throw away scrap wood in the dumpster. You can locate woodworking shops,



*Rustic pallet wood bird houses sell well at hardware stores, garden centers, craft and feed stores*

cabinet shops, and other sources of free wood by using the Yellow Pages. I stop at these businesses and find the owner or manager. I explain that I putter around making birdhouses and ask permission to go through the dumpster for wood. I have never had anyone say no. They have to pay to have the dumpster emptied. If I carry off some of the wood, I'm saving them money.

Small pieces which the cabinet shop cannot use are perfect for birdhouses. A birdhouse business recycles material that would otherwise clog the landfill. And it provides income for us backwoods types who prefer not to work for someone else. An entrepreneurial type could make this a full-time business. Dumpster wood and pallet wood is also suitable for making shadow boxes, chicken or rabbit nesting boxes and book shelves.

If I want bigger pieces of wood from the pallets for building wood fences and chicken sheds, I use a Milwaukee Sawzall to cut the nails so the pieces of wood are intact. By the way, I bought the Sawzall used, but in like-new condition, at a pawn shop for \$99. It makes short work of pallets and I have larger pieces of wood for bigger projects. I figure it this way: seven birdhouses at \$15 each pays for the Sawzall.

For a few weeks of work gathering and taking apart pallets, you can have enough wood for 100 birdhouses. At

four a day for five weeks, you can have 100 birdhouses ready to sell for \$10 to \$20 each. That is a minimum \$1000 in six weeks or less. Enlist your wife or children and make it a family endeavor. If you are lucky enough to live in a tourist area, birdhouses are impulse buys that create vacation memories for years to come. They can also be sold at your roadside produce stand.

Here are some tips for making a quality birdhouse that will catch a buyer's eyes and make them want your product.

(1) Sand saw cuts so there are no splinters or rough edges. (2) Use a Forstner bit or spade bit to drill your entrance holes. Forstner bits make the cleanest cut. It's easier to drill the entrance hole before you assemble the birdhouse. You can also make a rectangular entrance hole using your bandsaw.

(3) Use paneling nails for assembly since they hold better than finish nails.

(4) When using oak, it's best to pre-drill nail holes since oak is hard to drive nails through.

(5) Cut a piece of roofing tin with tin snips to form a rustic metal roof.

Rust only enhances the antique appearance. Old license tags also work as roofs.

(6) Cut and trim a tree branch in one-inch lengths and nail three pieces to the front porch of your birdhouse to make a woodpile. Takes just a few minutes and customers love it.

(7) You can utilize small pieces of wood by sanding one side lightly and painting a hand-lettered, rustic sign: Coke, Burma Shave, Canoe Rental, Park Ranger, For Wrent For a Song, Don't Feed the Bears, No Crows Allowed, etc. Tack these to the side, front, and back. They're real eye catchers and help sell birdhouses.

(8) Cut up Coke, Pepsi, or beer cans and use the logos as signs. Tack them onto your birdhouses with 1/2-inch brads. The aluminum lasts a long time and looks great. In my area, red Coke signs are the most popular. Metal bottle caps also make a colorful birdhouse decoration. Specialty beer bottle caps are the most colorful.

(9) If you have a resort, bed and breakfast, or other businesses in your area, use their name on a birdhouse sign. They may buy several to display or resell.

(10) Use your imagination and experiment. If you have access to driftwood, utilize that in your birdhouses and feeders.



*It's possible to make 4 or 5 birdhouses a day in less than 8 hours.*

(11) Exterior house paint, in vibrant pink, red, yellow, green, and blue, gives birdhomes an art deco look. Specially mixed colors that other customers decided not to buy can be purchased for \$3 to \$5 a gallon.

## **Additional sources of pallets and free wood**

1. Motorcycle dealers, (Crating around new bikes) 2. Snowmobile dealers, (Crating around new machines) 3. Major appliance dealers, (Crating) 4. Cabinet shops 5. Tool & die shops 6. Machine shops 7. Lumber yards 8. Paint stores 9. Grocery stores 10. Garden centers 11. Behind shopping centers 12. Brickyards 13. New home sites 14. Custom window & door builders 15. Kitchen countertop makers 16. Electrical supply houses 17. Plumbing supply businesses 18. Manufacturing plants 19. Hardware stores 20. Old barns, sheds, and houses

## **Easy steps to making a beautiful birdhouse**

1) Find and prepare pallet wood as described above. Be sure to make the front and back at the same time.

(2) Choose two same size pieces and draw a 45 degree angle to form the gable.

(3) Nail these two pieces lightly together with a smooth finish nail, leaving enough to pull out the nail after you cut the wood.

(4) Now saw the angle you drew. This forms the A gable for the roof and gives you two pieces cut exactly the same. Remove the nail. (5) Drill an entrance hole in one of the pieces you just cut. Sand any rough edges.

### **Make the sides:**

(6) Find two pieces, approximately the same size and trim them to fit. (7) Using one inch paneling nails, nail the side pieces to the front and back pieces. Pine and poplar usually do not require pre-drilling. If the wood splits or if using hardwoods, pre-drilling is

required, with a 1/16-inch drill bit. (8) Now you have the basic shape of the birdhouse.

### **Making the bottom:**

(9) Choose a piece of pallet wood wide enough to extend to the outer edge of your side pieces. If you do not have a piece that wide, make one by nailing two pieces together. Lay them side by side and connect them with one-inch wood straps. Drive the nails clear through and then bend them over or snip them off.

(10) Nail the bottom to the sides, again pre-drilling if necessary. We should note here that if you want your birdhouse to have a front porch, you can make the bottom piece two or three inches longer than the birdhouse. This gives the birds a place to perch outside the nest.

(11) Before roofing the birdhouse, nail a bottle cap or aluminum can sign to the front. It's easier to do now, while the roof is off. If you want to add a small woodpile, now is the time. Three pieces, two nailed to the porch floor and one nailed on top of the two, makes a nice looking woodpile.

## **Making the roof**

(12) The roof should be as long as the bottom piece, so your bird porch has a roof, or just slightly longer so that it overhangs the entrance hole to keep out the rain.

(13) Your roof can be multiple slats that overlap to give a chalet look. Or you can use just one piece on each side of the A gable. Pre-drill before you nail, making sure the roof piece is straight. Nail the second roof piece and your birdhouse is finished.

(14) I like to make my birdhouses distinctive so I often cut a 1-inch thick branch and trim off the limbs. Then I cut the trimmed branch and use it to make two rustic porch columns. I pre-drill and attach these with drywall screws, countersinking the hole. This makes a good, solid fit and is strong enough to be used as a handle when picking up the birdhouse.

(15) Now is the time to make use of the signs we mentioned earlier. Using 1/2-inch brads. Nail bottlecaps or hand lettered signs, or colorful logos cut from aluminum cans to the sides, front, back, or top of your birdhouse.

(16) If you used dumpster wood, you may wish to paint the birdhouse. Use bright, vibrant colors for an art deco look or woodsy, subdued colors to blend with the natural surroundings.

(17) Now you are ready to make another birdhouse. The more you make, the better they'll look. Practice makes perfect. Soon, you'll be putting them together easily, almost on autopilot.

(18) Offer them to your customers with a smile. You might offer wholesale buyers a 10% price break if they buy five or more.

(19) Remember, use your imagination. Look in books and decorator magazines for birdhouse ideas. Try your hand at bookshelves, shadow boxes, laying boxes for chickens, doghouses or what ever strikes your fancy. The wood is free and about all you've got invested is your time. You can make a nice profit using the tools you already have. If you have to buy or borrow tools, you can still make enough birdhouses in a month to pay for the tools.

As you get more proficient at wood-working, you might want to use your dumpster or pallet wood to make other craft items. Now that you have an almost inexhaustible supply of free wood, you can go as far as your enthusiasm and entrepreneurial ability will take you. Δ

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website at:**  
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## Try this end-of-summer fare

*By Richard Blunt*

As the end of summer approaches I can sense that my taste buds have become a little jaded. It's the result of eating too many grilled hamburgers, frankfurters, and other easy-to-prepare warm weather foods. Now I need an antidote, so I turn to my taste-bud-lifter recipe file for relief. Since I'm not ready to pack away my Weber kettle grill and move into the kitchen, creative barbecue seems the way to go. Over the years all of the recipes in this file have added a lot of excitement to my dinner table when other foods seem to have become boring. In this issue I'll share with you a couple of the recipes that have made this summer more interesting and hope that my selections add some excitement to your dinner table as well.

The recipes here are drawn from two of the most opinion-laced culinary experiences I can think of: chili con carne and barbecue. These are two areas of the culinary arts that invite free interpretation and creative thinking. With the recipes that follow I have done just that. If pork loin, marinated in a home made Jamaican jerk seasoning and slow smoke-roasted over charcoal, or a chili spiced mixed bean casserole with rich caramel flavor sound interesting to you, read on. You'll have some fun here.

### Barbecued jerked pork roast

Cooking with Jamaican jerk seasoning is an intense and addicting experience. When barbecuing, you can use the seasoning as a paste, a rub, or a wet marinade for roasts. With a minor modification it can be used as a basting sauce and can even be "painted" on grilled hamburgers, chicken, or chops. Its pungent and lively flavor complements any meat, poultry, or fish but it is at its best when rubbed on a bone-in-pork roast and slow roasted over charcoal enhanced with hardwood smoke.

I usually reserve Jamaican jerk barbecue for lovers of spicy food or those who think they have tasted everything. A couple weeks ago my wife, Tricia, asked me to prepare something different using a bone-in-pork loin she had taken from the freezer. At the time I was hopelessly trying to create some order out of the recipes in my taste-bud-lifter file. I had just set the Jamaican jerk recipe aside, along with seven or eight other nearly forgotten recipes. But, after hearing her request, I grabbed the recipe, ran to the kitchen, and took a quick inventory of ingredients there. Everything I needed to make a respectable jerk marinade was in stock. If the kids couldn't handle this spicy pork dish, I would cook hamburgers for them. As it turned out the hamburgers were not necessary because Sarah, Jason, and Michael



*Richard Blunt*

loved the pork. They did, however, drink nearly a quart of milk, to cool the "tong tingle," as Michael put it.

Over the years this recipe has caused a great deal of controversy at my dinner table. I have been told that true Jamaican jerk barbecue taste can only be attained when the paste is made with the fiery West India grown Jamaican red chili pepper and a uniquely pungent scallion, both of which are hard, if not impossible, to find in this country. The authentic taste also requires that the meat be slow cooked over the smoldering wood of the allspice tree, another rare item in this country. However, I have found that ripe habañero or scotch bonnet peppers combined with local garden-fresh scallions will produce a very satisfactory and lively tasting paste. Also, available hard woods such as mesquite, hickory, or maple enhance barbecued food with a flavor of their own and all of them will produce an enjoyable jerk barbecue flavor.

After you have prepared the formula that I suggest here, feel free to make the additions and changes that suit your personal taste and let me know what you think.

When you make your choice of chili pepper for this or any other recipe containing chili peppers, remember one important rule: each variety of chili pepper has its own unique taste. Success with this recipe requires the use of a pepper that has a flavor close to that of the Jamaican red, and the habañero or Scotch bonnet, in my opinion, are two that do. Any other pepper will change the character of the marinade—but they'd be worth trying sometime. Also, do not combine the marinade suggested in this recipe with the paste. Treat them as two separate elements. It may not be necessary to use all the paste, it depends on the size of your roast, and any leftover paste will keep well under refrigera-

tion for at least a week. All of the marinade, on the other hand, should be used, regardless of the size of your roast.

**Ingredients:**

1 4 to 5 pound bone-in loin of pork

**Paste ingredients:**

2 Tbsp. toasted allspice berries  
3 tsp. toasted whole black peppercorns  
1 cinnamon stick, broken into small pieces and toasted  
6 toasted whole cloves  
1½ tsp. kosher salt  
½ nutmeg berry, grated  
2 cups onion, diced medium  
4 whole scallions, diced medium  
2 cloves fresh garlic, peeled and chopped  
1 tsp. malt vinegar  
1 tsp. dark brown sugar  
5 tsp. fresh thyme leaves  
6 fresh habañero or scotch bonnet chili peppers, stemmed and seeded  
2 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil  
A little dry white wine to add moisture and some additional flavor during the pureeing process

**Method:**

1. Toast the allspice berries, peppercorns, cinnamon stick, and whole cloves over medium heat in a heavy bottom pan. Cast iron works best. Be careful, this process can be tricky. For the first minute or two nothing will seem to be happening. Then suddenly the spices will give off a small amount of aromatic smoke and will start browning very rapidly. Stir the spices constantly during this process, and remove them from the heat as soon as the cinnamon starts to brown.

2. Set the spices aside to cool, then grind them to a fine powder in a spice mill, blender, or a coffee grinder that is reserved for this purpose.

3. Combine the toasted and ground spices with the salt and ground nutmeg and set this mixture aside.

4. Combine the onion, scallions, garlic, malt vinegar, brown sugar, fresh thyme and prepared chili peppers in a blender or food processor. Add the olive oil then add about 2 tablespoons of the wine and process the mixture into a course paste. You can add a little more wine if the mixture seems to be too dry.

5. Add the dry ingredients, and pulse the machine a couple of times to mix.

**Marinade:**

½ cup light soy sauce  
¼ cup fresh lime juice  
1 cup apple juice or fresh apple cider if the season is right

**Method:**

Combine all ingredients and set aside.

**The barbecue:**

1. The day before the barbecue place the pork roast on a cutting board a punch holes, about ½-inch deep and about 1 inch apart, into the roast with a sharp knife.

2. Rub the paste all over roast. Using your fingers push as much of the paste as possible into the holes.

3. Place the roast in a nonreactive bowl or large plastic bag you can seal, add the marinade, cover and marinate the roast overnight in the refrigerator.

4. Remove the roast from the refrigerator and let it stand at room temperature for one hour. While the roast is standing, prepare your covered grill for cooking. At the same time put four hardwood chunks in warm water to soak.

5. Fire up about 60 charcoal briquets. When the coals are covered with a white ash, divide them into two equal piles and push the piles to opposite sides of the fire grate, and drop two of the soaking hardwood chunks on each pile. Place a suitably sized disposable aluminum pan, half filled with water, in the middle of the fire grate. This is your drip pan.

6. Position the roast directly over the drip pan, put the lid in place, then check to make sure that the top and bottom vents are completely open.

7. Figure on 30 minutes roasting time per pound of meat. The roast is done when your meat thermometer reads 170 degrees F. at the thickest part of the roast.

## Custom made chili seasoning

Chili is more than just a culinary experience to folks who consider this simple but elegant dish a favorite food. To them it's an irresistible passion. Some even call it chili madness. It is the only food I know of with several societies dedicated solely to its appreciation and even its own newspaper.

Since its humble beginnings in south Texas during the early 1800s, chili has risen over the years to become an international food with devotees from all walks of life and all economic strata. And this dedicated collective is by no means passive. Since the mid 1960s chili cookoffs have been organized in all parts of the country throughout the year. These chili cookoffs have been the scene of feuds, rivalries, and even knock-down drag-out fights over who makes the greatest chili.

The following chili seasoning is one that I use to season most of my chili recipes. I also use it to enhance the flavor of many other dishes such as salad dressings, table sauces, and casseroles. It has never gotten me into a fight, but it receives almost as many comments, both positive and negative, as my Jamaican jerk seasoning. It is used here to season the chili bean casserole that follows. The obvious presence of chili peppers, both sweet and hot, in this casserole

has always invited dinner table discussion over the proper use of chili peppers, and the rights and wrongs of seasoning a pot of chili. Give these two recipes a try and see if you can bring on some lively conversation at your own dinner table.

**Ingredients:**

2 oz. dried ancho chilies, stems, seeds and veins removed  
2 dried pasilla chilies, stems, seeds and veins removed  
2 Tbsp. whole cumin seed, toasted  
1 Tbsp. whole coriander seed, toasted  
4 whole cloves, toasted  
½ tsp. allspice berries, toasted  
1 Tbsp. dried marjoram  
1 tsp. dried oregano  
1½ tsp. dried, granulated garlic  
2 Tbsp. hot Hungarian paprika

**Method:**

1. After you've removed the stems, seeds and veins from the chilies, break or cut them up into pieces. To toast them, place the pieces in a heavy-bottomed skillet over low heat and toast until they are fragrant, slightly darkened, and somewhat crisp. Do not walk away from this procedure, and stir the peppers constantly while they are in the pan. Set the toasted peppers aside to cool.

2. Using the same procedure described above, lightly toast the cumin seed, coriander seed, whole cloves and allspice berries.

3. In a spice grinder, blender, or a coffee mill reserved for grinding spices, process the toasted peppers into a fine powder. Combine the cumin seed, coriander seed, whole cloves and allspice berries and repeat the grinding process.

4. Combine the powdered chilies and spices with the marjoram, oregano, granulated garlic, and Hungarian paprika.

This formula is designed to add chili flavor to dishes, not heat. You can add as much heat as you can handle by simply adding measured amounts of powdered cayenne pepper or other pure hot chili powder. The seasoning itself will keep for months if stored in an air tight container and kept in your freezer.

## Chili spiced cowboy beans

This is a great dish to serve with any type of barbecued roast. If you add a pound of spicy sausage or smoked ham this dish can be served as a complete meal. The addition of dried pasilla chili pepper strips gives this dish a deep rich chili flavor with just a hint of sweetness. If you follow my example and serve this casserole with the barbecued jerked pork you will have all critics and supporters returning for more.

You can use any dried bean of your choice with this recipe. I have used kidney and navy beans in combination

with blackeye peas with excellent results. The casserole can also be made into a meatless dish by eliminating the bacon and adding 2 Tbsp. of vegetable oil to saute the onion.

**Ingredients:**

6 oz. dried pinto beans  
6 oz. dried black beans  
4 oz. hickory smoked slab bacon, diced  
1 cup onion, diced  
4 dried ancho or pasilla chilies, stemmed, seeded, and deveined  
2 Tbsp. tomato paste  
14 oz. can diced tomatoes with the juice  
2 Tbsp. brown sugar  
1 Tbsp. molasses  
2 Tbsp. soy sauce  
1 Tbsp. malt vinegar  
¼ cup canned vegetable stock  
½ cup of your favorite beer or ale  
1 Tbsp. custom chili seasoning  
kosher salt to taste  
ground cayenne pepper to taste

**Method:**

1. Soak the beans overnight in a large pot, following the directions on the package. After soaking, rinse the beans at least twice using plenty of cold water.

2. Put the beans in a suitably sized pot with enough water to cover the beans by three inches. Bring the beans to a boil and boil rapidly for five minutes. Drain the beans immediately and place them in a casserole large enough to readily hold all of the ingredients.

3. Place the diced bacon in a heavy bottomed skillet over medium heat and saute the bacon until it is browned and most of the fat has been removed from the pieces. Drain the bacon, reserving 2 Tbsp. of the fat. Do not wash or scrape the bits from the bottom of the pan. Return the skillet to the burner, place over a medium heat, and add the reserved fat. Add the diced onion to the skillet and saute until the onion is lightly browned, about 10 minutes. Stir the sauteed onions and the reserved bacon into the beans.

4. Cut or tear the prepared chilies into strips that are about ½-inch long and ¼-inch wide and add them to the beans. Do the best you can but the measurements are not critical.

5. Combine the tomato paste, diced tomatoes, brown sugar, molasses, soy sauce, vinegar, vegetable stock, beer, and chili seasoning. Gently stir this mixture into the beans.

6. Cover the casserole and place it in an oven, preheated to 350 degrees. Bake for 1½ to 2 hours, or until the beans are tender without being mushy. After the first hour check the beans for the desired degree of tenderness every 15 minutes. During the final fifteen minutes of baking add salt and cayenne pepper to taste. Δ

## Holy mackerel, don't flounder around; make your own lures just for the halibut

By Tom Mysiewicz

For several years I lived on a remote island in Washington's San Juan group, and when I wanted fresh food the water was sometimes the only place to turn. Actually having to catch fish, rather than just entertaining myself, taught me a thing or two about seafood self-sufficiency.

Aside from recreation, there's little point in fishing if what you catch winds up costing you more than if you purchased it, which is likely when you take into account the many variables in fishing: expensive lures (that frequently hang up on reefs), costly bait, and gas-consuming boats for trolling.

After wearing out several trolling motors, losing a small mint to bottom formations of the North Pacific, and listening to my wife's howling about bait residues on my fishing clothes, I began to experiment with homemade lures. I tried some alternatives. Ultimately, I hit on an effective bottom-fish and salmon lure for use on the West coast. With this lure I've caught king and silver salmon, rock cod, ling cod, greenling, small halibut, and flounder.



*This sea-run trout thought the lure was its next big meal.*

To make this lure, you'll need the following:

- Approximately one-square-foot of copper sheet from a hardware store.
- A lead melting pot or lead ladle you can heat lead in over a blow torch.
- Old tire-balancing weights or other scrap lead.
- 10-inch lengths of 100-lb. plus test stainless steel crab-pot wire. If you can find a crab-pot maker, as I did, he'll probably be glad to give you his wire scraps for free.
- 60-pound test (or higher) barrel fishing swivels.
- 1/0 or larger treble hooks
- Spray paint. White, blue, green, and yellow are good colors to work with.

You'll use the copper sheet to make your mold. This will save you the \$20 or more it would cost you to buy a manufactured aluminum mold. Using a stylus or nail on the sheet, outline the approximate size of the lure (Figure 1). I've found that in the Pacific Northwest a 4-inch by 1/2-inch lure imitating a needlefish is a good size. Where herring or anchovies are the prevalent bait fish, wider and larger or smaller sizes may be tried.

Using a blunt metal punch, hammer out a 1/4-inch depression in the copper sheet corresponding to your outline (Figure 2). You may go slightly deeper for extra weight. Since making the depression will cause some deformation in the copper plate, hammer out the flat parts so they are fairly flush with the upper rim of the depression you just made and so, when you pour it, the molten lead will stay in the depression.

Next, take a length of stainless steel wire and center it lengthwise over the



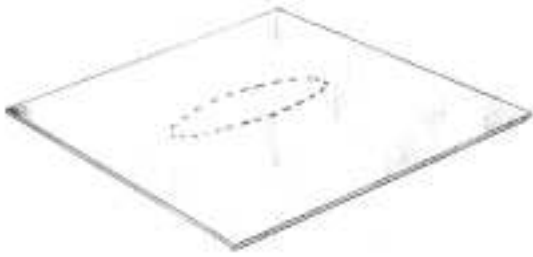
*Homemade lures can be cast from shore or a boat, or vertically jigged*

depression in the copper sheet. Press the wire down into the depression and, holding it with one hand, bend the ends sticking out so they are flush with the copper sheet. If the wire stays balanced in the depression when you let go, it's fine. Otherwise, adjust the ends so it stays put when you pour the lead.

Next, melt your lead. If you're using old balancing weights, be sure to fish out the steel retainers after the lead is melted.

Give the copper sheet a spritz of WD-40 before pouring the lead for the first lure. Once the sheet gets hot the lead won't stick to it anymore and you can shake out the lures by flipping the copper sheet with pliers.

Then, put your first wire length into the depression on the sheet. Pour lead into the depression until the lead



*Figure 1*

appears to be just over the depression (Figure 3). When the lead has solidified, flip out the lure. Remember, the wire has to be inside the lead with two ends sticking out. Use needlenose pliers to put the next wire into the mold.

Repeat the process until you have made as many lures as you have melted lead for.

After allowing the lures to cool for a half hour, line them up on a sheet of plywood and give them a coat of white paint on one side. When dry, turn them over and do the same on the other side. Then spray small amounts of blue, yellow, and/or green on each side to achieve the desired effect. In different areas and in different depths, fish actually do prefer certain colors so you may have to experiment. I have also found fish that prefer the lures unpainted on cloudy days or at deep depths.

When the paint is completely dry, put swivels on one end of each lure by putting one of the protruding wires on



*Figure 2*

each through one swivel loop, and make four to five wraps. Snip off the excess wire. Next put treble hooks on each lure by putting the other protruding wire on each lure through the hook eye, twisting the wire about five loops, and snipping off the excess. The lures are now complete (Figure 4).

Do not worry if your lure has some uneven or odd-shaped features. After a while you will learn which ones actually make the lures more attractive to fish. I've found that minor blemishes do not repel fish. The key is that there should be no sharp or angular edges that can fray your line. A small file will allow you to quickly smooth burrs and sharp edges.

This lure works so well on the West Coast that I haven't used bait from a boat in more than 10 years. (Commercial lures such as the Dungeness Stinger and Buzz-Bomb also work well, but can be costly when fishing in rocky areas, as previously mentioned, where you can lose several daily).

And here's a tip: Except for striped bass, bluefish, pollack, and cod, lures, in my opinion, don't work all that well on the East Coast, so stick with bait if your homestead is there.

## Using the lure

While the homemade lure can be cast from shore or jigged off jetties and piers, you'll get the most fish if you can use it from a boat and vertically jig. This is done by letting the lure down to the desired depth (three feet or more off bottom for bottomfish), lifting up slowly, then letting the rod tip dip quickly down.

When the lure flutters down and you once again feel its weight, lift slowly again. When you feel a fish grab it or hang on, lift sharply but do not drop the rod tip until you have begun reeling fast enough to prevent slack.

## When and where

Picking the time you fish is next in importance. Slack high tide is best for most saltwater species on both coasts (except halibut, which prefer slack low tide). Any nautical shop can steer you to a current atlas that will show you the current flow for the spot you plan to fish, when you plan to fish it, and at the time you hope to fish it. Often, an atlas will show a period of



*Figure 3*

relatively gentle current that stretches between tides, and you can't tell this from an ordinary tide chart. Find the right slack period and you'll catch fish all day, regardless of what that tide chart says.

Location is next in importance. Inlets usually have rocky areas that hold fish. Likewise, large rock outcroppings on shore can be indicative of an underwater ridge running out a considerable distance. If such a rocky ridge runs out from shore, fish will often hold on the side of the ridge opposite the current flow. This lessens the amount of work they have to do while waiting for a meal. In deep water, buoys often mark hidden reefs and high spots that can be virtual fish

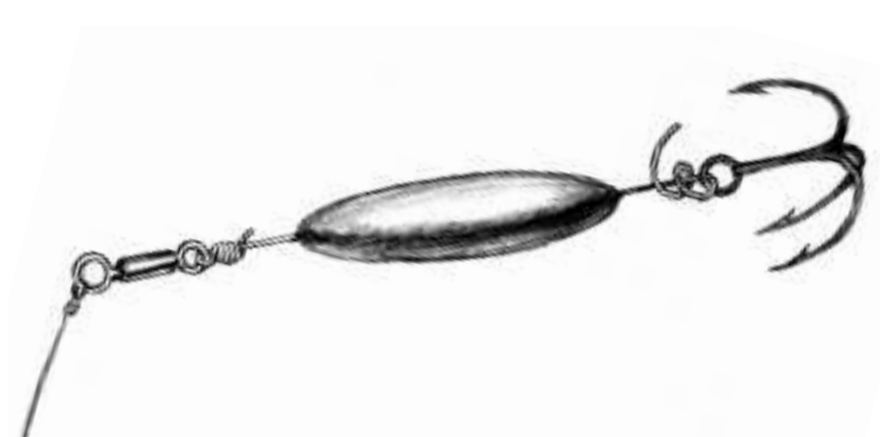


Figure 4

magnets—at least I've met some halibut that seemed to think so.

Fish deep on the West Coast. The deeper the better. I rarely fish in less than 100 feet of water. In Oregon and Washington, a medium-to-light boat rod is ideal for such fishing. Use one of the newer non-stretch lines, e.g., Spiderwire, and you'll be able to set your hook several hundred feet down.

Often small reefs in very deep water are overlooked by anglers searching for easier prey, and huge rockfish are just waiting there to be caught.

### **Cleaning and packing your catch**

I've eaten inordinate amounts of fish over my lifetime and I've also worked in commercial fish packing plants. I can summarize my experience by saying that, if you're planning to freeze your fish for a prolonged period, the following steps should help fish from getting fishy or drying out for up to six months:

1. Bleed fish whenever possible. Cutting a gill immediately after battling a caught fish and placing it in water will often be sufficient. This is especially true of salmonoids.

2. Don't let fish get hot or sit in the sun; clean them as soon as practical.

3. Fillets and whole fish should be soaked in cool salt water after cleaning for at least 10 minutes.

4. If you have a vacuum sealer, that's the optimal way to prepare fish

for freezing. If not, use reclosable freezer bags and leave enough water in the bags to glaze or coat the fish. If you don't have reclosable bags, freeze the fish first, dip it in water/sugar solution for a moment to glaze it, then put it in a regular plastic bag and close it. Reusable plastic freezer containers can be used in place of plastic bags; just leave in fluid sufficient to coat the fish. The key here is to prevent drying in the cold atmosphere of your freezer.

Fish can also be smoked, salted and/or dried, but that's the subject of a future article. Δ

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